

COVERING THE BEST IN HORROR, SCI-FI & FANTASY ENTERTAINMENT

# SHADOWLAND MAGAZINE

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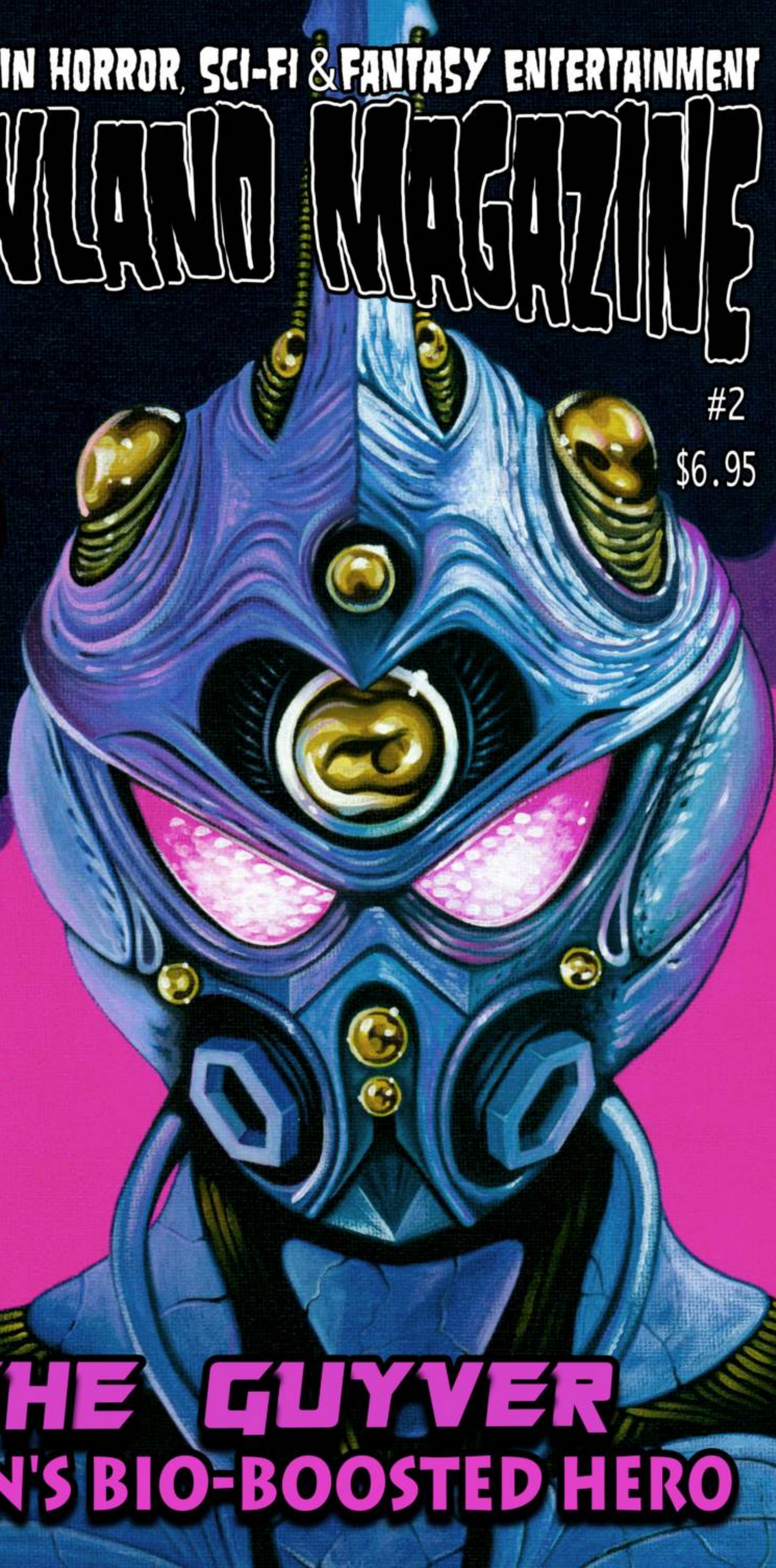
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**TOMBS OF THE  
BLIND DEAD**

**WILLIAM CASTLE'S  
GHOST STORY**

**AMITYVILLE  
HORROR**

**BIGFOOT**



**THE GUYVER**  
**JAPAN'S BIO-BOOSTED HERO**



## DREADITORIAL

The days are becoming shorter while the nights continue to grow longer. Yes, the fall season is here, along with our second issue of *Shadowland Magazine*! And what an issue it is! Fans of Amando De Ossorio's *Blind Dead* tetralogy are in for a treat with our *Blind Dead* retrospective, while sci-fi enthusiasts will find an in-depth analysis of *The Guyver* manga, anime, & live-action films. Of course, that's only the tip of the iceberg...we also take a look at William Castle's TV series, *Ghost Story*! Still not enough horror, sci-fi & fantasy for you? *News Bites* and *Beyond Fantastique* should help quell your hunger.

It's worth mentioning that the response from the first issue of *Shadowland Magazine* was great and we have every intention of outdoing ourselves with each and every new issue. And don't forget to let us know what you think! We love the feedback.

As for our next issue, we don't want to reveal too much, except that we're going *batty*! That's right, our winter edition is everything 'bat-themed'. We have some astounding articles in store, including a thorough analysis of *Batman Returns* (it's hard to believe but 2012 marks the film's 20th anniversary – jeez, time does fly). Followers of the Caped Crusader will be interested in our 'Secret Origins of Batman' feature-article, which looks at who *really* created the Dark Knight. Hint: it wasn't Bob Kane. And we'll be giving some much-deserved respect to the 1930 horror/thriller *The Bat Whispers*. All that and we've *still* barely touched the surface! It's not one to miss...but enough about next issues goodies, let's make our way into *this* issue...

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P.S. Once again, we encourage readers to contact *Shadowland Magazine* with your thoughts, feedback, articles, and/or reviews. We want to hear from YOU!

### ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

**Cover:** Another amazing artistic piece by the very talented Dwayne Pinkney. This time he offers a striking portrait of *The Guyver*! See more of Dwayne's artwork at [www.ShadowlandMagazine.com](http://www.ShadowlandMagazine.com) He is also available for commissions at [DPinkneyArt@hotmail.com](mailto:DPinkneyArt@hotmail.com)

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# NEWS BITES

## ATTACK OF THE KILLER REMAKES

A remake of the 1978 horror-comedy *Attack of the Killer Tomatoes* is in the works. Emmett/Furla Films, the studio responsible for *The Wicker Man* remake, is set to produce the film with Kent Nichols as director. No release date is yet known.

## THE SPIRIT OF VENGEANCE RIDES AGAIN

Things will be heating up on February 17th, 2012 when Nicolas Cage once again takes on the role of Marvel Comics' supernatural hellfire-spawned hero in *Ghost Rider: Spirit of Vengeance*. The film will follow a darker direction than the 2007 *Ghost Rider* outing, taking place primarily in Eastern Europe where the motorcycle-riding demon will be pitted against Satan himself.



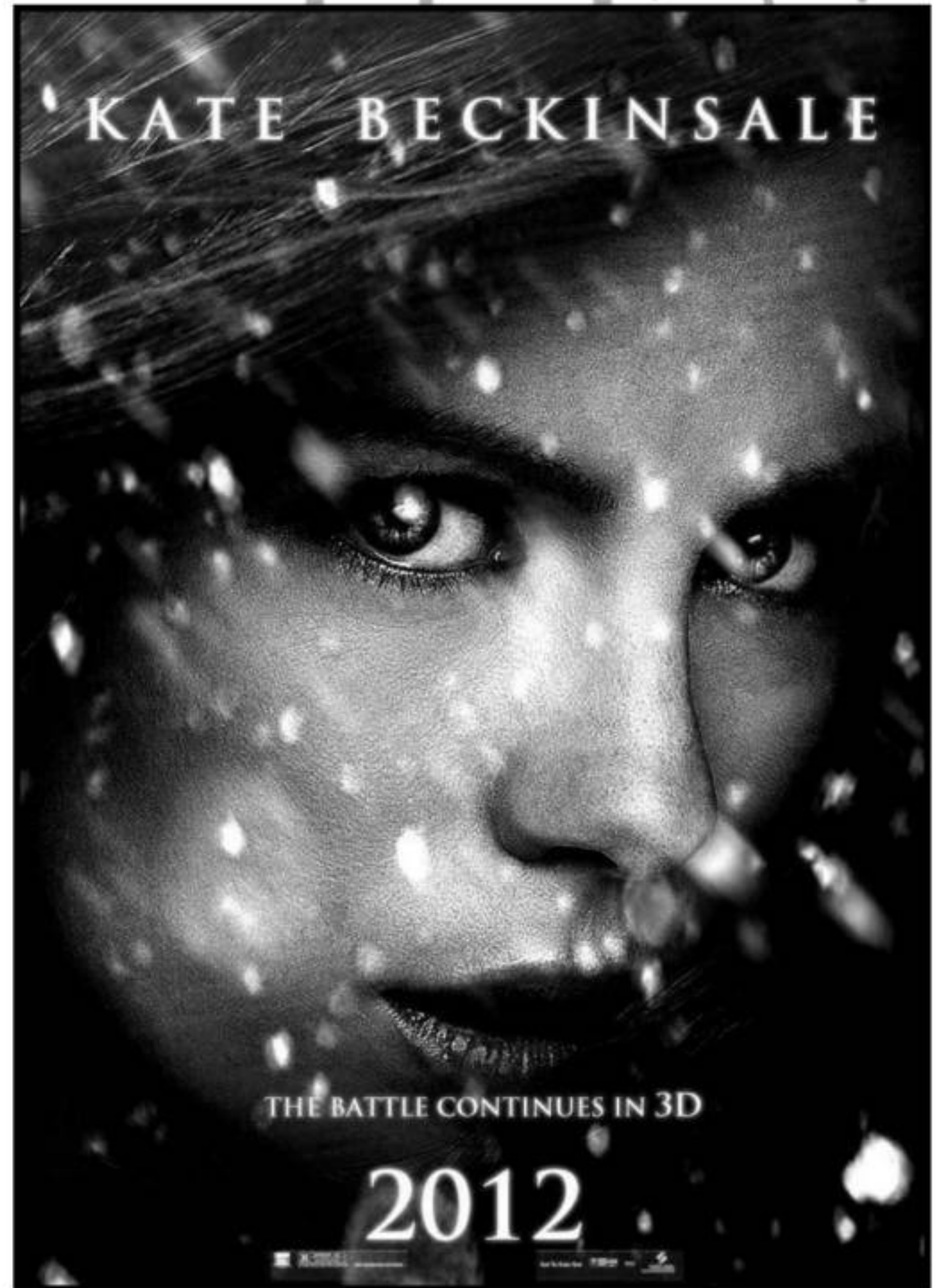
Marvel's hot-headed demon in action.

## THE SAW IS *STILL* FAMILY

Lionsgate will be resurrecting Leatherface once more in *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre 3D*. Instead of being a reboot, director John Luessenhop has confirmed that *TCM 3D* will be a direct sequel to the 1973 original. Gunnar Hansen, who played Leatherface in the first film, is stated to have a brief cameo and Bill Moseley, who portrayed Chop-Top in *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre 2*, will be returning to the screen as well. Scott Eastwood (Clint Eastwood's youngest son) has been set to star as one of the main characters who gets swept up in the gruesome three-dimensional massacre.

## THE WAR RAGES ON

The fourth installment of the *Underworld* franchise will hit theaters on January 20th, 2012. The plot of *Underworld: Awakening* finds humanity uncovering the existence of both vampires and lycans. Kate Beckinsale once again reprises her role as Selene from the first two *Underworld* films.



## DON'T FEED THEM AFTER MIDNIGHT

Warner Brothers has expressed interest in a third *Gremlins* film. A remake was considered back in 2009, but the possibility of a sequel is currently on the table. Little is known about the plot and whether Joe Dante will be returning to the director's chair.

## MORE THAN MEETS THE EYE

Michael Bay may be finished with his *Transformers* trilogy, but that won't stop the robots in disguise from returning to the small screen this year. The Hasbro owned HUB channel has already been airing the animated *Transformers: Prime* series, but a new Transformers cartoon will soon be joining the line-up, titled, *Transformers: Rescue Bots* – a more 'kid-friendly' show. The Hub has also been airing *G.I. Joe: Renegades*, a loose reboot of the *G.I. Joe: A Real American Hero* series from the '80s.





## WHO WAS THAT MASKED MAN?

*The Lone Ranger* had been scheduled to ride once more on December 21st, 2012, however, Disney has since pulled the plug on the project, citing budget issues as the primary reason. The disappointing box office numbers of *Cowboys and Aliens* may also have had something to do with releasing another 'western' themed film. Johnny Depp was set to play Tonto, the Lone Ranger's faithful companion while George Clooney and Brad Pitt were rumored to both be in the running for the role of the legendary masked man (though neither were officially confirmed). Jerry Bruckheimer was set to produce while the director's chair would have gone to Gore Verbinski.

## COBRAAAA!

*G.I. Joe* won't be missing in action for long. A sequel to 2009's *G.I. Joe: The Rise of Cobra* is currently underway. The cast is set to include Channing Tatum,



Ray Stevenson, Dwayne Johnson, Adrianne Palicki, and Bruce Willis. *G.I. Joe: Retaliation* will arrive in theaters on June 29th, 2012. Jon M. Chu, director of *Step Up 2: The Streets* & *Step Up 3D*, will assume directorial duties.



## JAPAN'S ICONIC SUPERHERO BLASTS BACK INTO ACTION

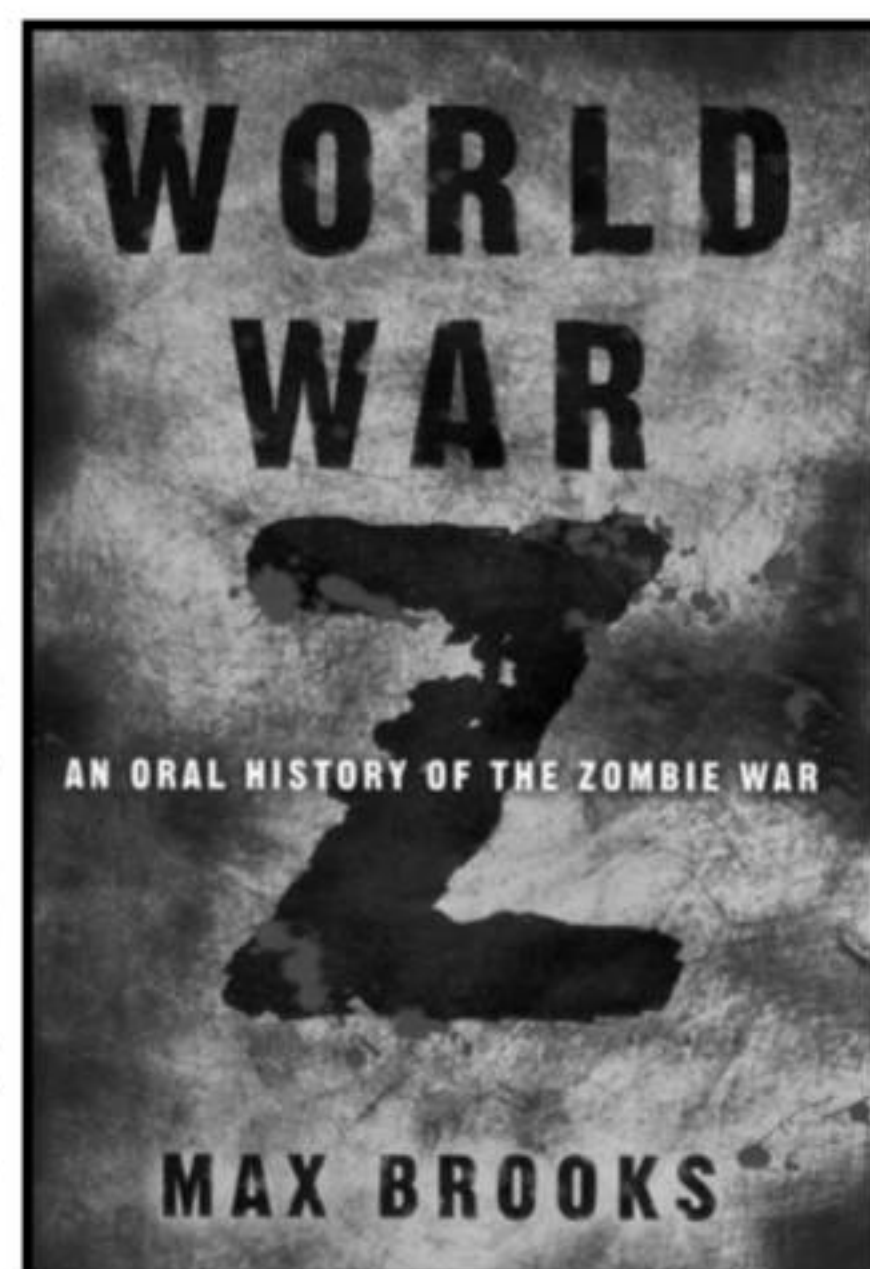
Tsuburaya Productions has announced a new Ultraman film for 2012 to commemorate the 45th anniversary of the long-lasting Ultra series. The film will

be a direct sequel to the previous two Ultraman films, *Mega Monster Battle Ultra Galaxy* (2009) and *Ultraman Zero: The Revenge of Belial* (2010). Currently titled *Ultraman Saga*, Tsuburaya Productions' 2012 effort will be released across Japanese theaters in both 2D and 3D.



## YOU CAN'T KEEP A GOOD CORPSE DOWN

Just when you thought that the zombie genre was dead and buried comes *World War Z*, a film revolving around a United Nations employee (played by Brad Pitt) who desperately attempts to stop the initial phases of a zombie apocalypse. Based on Max Brooks' novel (the son of Mel Brooks) who also wrote *The Zombie Survival Guide*. Scheduled for a December 21st, 2012 release.





# A FOND LOOK BACK AT JAPAN'S BIO-BOOSTED HERO, *THE GUYVER*



By Frank Warden

Living armor, shape-shifting monsters, evil corporations, gratuitous amounts of violence, and a lone hero trying to defy the odds – the *Guyver* has it all, and plenty more. First arriving on the scene as a manga (a term for a Japanese comic) in the mid '80s, the *Guyver* has since developed an impressive fan-base the world over. While not becoming a sci-fi icon in the same way that manga characters like *Lupin the 3rd* or *Sailor Moon* have, the *Guyver* has still retained a respectable amount of popularity well over two decades after his inception.

The *Guyver* began as the brainchild of manga artist Yoshiaki Takaya. At the start of his career, Takaya had contributed mostly to 'adult-themed' publications. *Lemon People*, a magazine-sized manga best described as Japan's answer to North America's *Heavy Metal* magazine, featured a number of his earliest works. Most of the publication's content would fall somewhere between the celebrated genres of sci-fi, horror, and fantasy, with some even delving into the realms of space opera and early cyberpunk. Ample helpings of violence, gore, and sex were often on display, making *Lemon People* solely intended for the older age set.

By the mid '80s Takaya had moved on from *Lemon People* magazine and began to develop a new manga that would be more suited for a wider audience. Thus, the *Guyver* was born. The initial volume of the



A 1994 issue of *Lemon People*.

*Bio-Booster Armor Guyver* manga was first serialized in *Shonen Captain* magazine beginning in 1985. Takaya's story managed to strike a cord with readers and the series would go on to be published continuously until 1997 when *Captain* ceased publication. The manga would then continue on in *Shonen Ace* magazine where it is still currently being published. The *Guyver* has since been translated into various languages around the world, including English in the '90s, when it was re-published by anime distributor, Viz Media.



## LIVING WEAPON

*Guyver* follows the story of Sho Fukamachi, an average seventeen-year-old high school student living in Japan. For the most part, Sho is a typical teenager; he's part of the school council and has a crush on the popular girl (who of course doesn't share the same feelings, at least at first, anyway). However, Sho's life takes a dramatic turn one day when, while walking home from school, he stumbles upon a strange looking object. Upon examining his unique find, the object – or more accurately – the 'unit', fuses with Sho, transforming him into the Guyver: a techno-organic bio-weapon. At its very essence the Guyver is like a symbiotic suit of armor, designed to protect its host, which in this case is Sho, and augments the wearer with enhanced strength, speed, and endurance – to the point where the host is almost invulnerable.

A popular saying well-known to comic fans is that "with great power comes great responsibility" and Sho soon finds the saying to be very true. The evil Chronos Corporation, an organization determined to rule the world, wants the Guyver unit back by any means necessary. Sho is then thrust into a life-or-death struggle to uncover the secrets of his newfound abilities and put an end to Chronos' plans for global domination. As could be expected, this is no easy task, as Chronos' network stretches worldwide and, along with a private army, they too have their supply of bio-weapons in the guise of



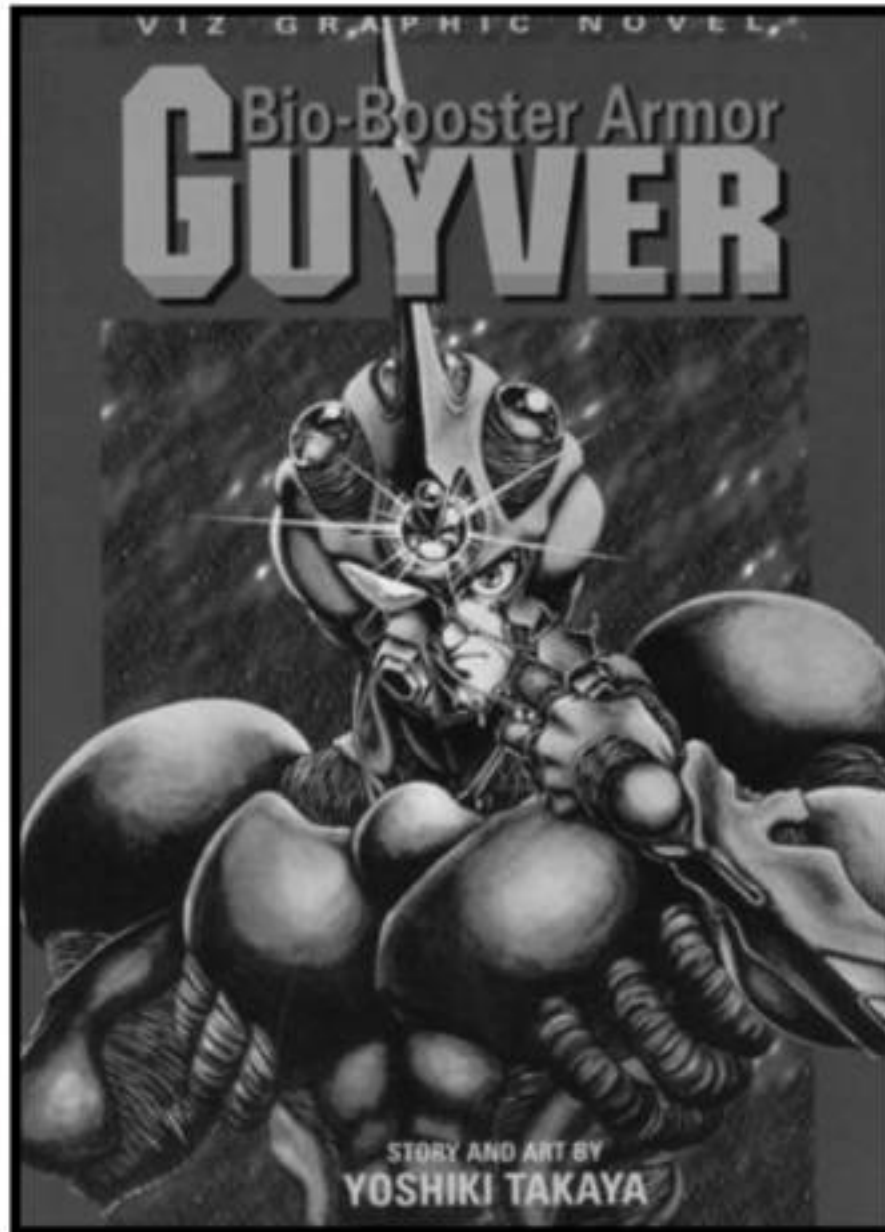


Zoanoids: monstrous creatures that can assume human appearance and transform at will.

Over time Sho learns to control and harness the powers of the Guyver while discovering the mysterious past of both the symbiotic unit and humanity itself. As it turns out,

the human race was created by an ancient species of aliens aeons ago for the sole purpose of serving them as living weapons. In turn, the Guyver unit was designed as a means to 'boost' a human's fighting potential to new heights. However, things backfired for the aliens when the first human-hosted Guyver turned against them. This is why the aliens called the unit 'Guyver' which means "out of control" in their language.

As with most action-related manga, the hero is pitted against more and more powerful opponents over time and *Bio-Booster Armor Guyver* is no exception. While the Guyver starts out taking on your standard run-of-the-mill Zoanoid, it isn't long before he encounters even stronger Hyper Zoanoids, the ever-powerful Zoalords, and even a few renegade Guyver units.



## FROM PAGE TO SCREEN

The Guyver's first foray into the world of anime came in 1986 with an hour-long feature titled *Guyver: Out of Control*. Released direct-to-video as an OVA (original video animation), the adaptation took many liberties from the source material, omitting characters and altering various subplots. Due to *Out of Control's* short runtime, it only covered the basic premise of the first four chapters of the *Guyver* manga.

Despite the OVA solely presenting the very fundamental aspects of the original story, it did succeed in featuring faithful character designs. The Guyver himself looks impressive along with a number of the Zoanoids, like Gregole and Vamore. Even so, *Out of Control* is severely hampered by a rushed plot that tries to cram way too much content into a mere hour. Character development is cast aside, leaving out most of Sho's personal internal struggle. Instead it becomes almost a hasty montage of what transpired in the manga: boy gets strange weaponized-armor, defeats a few evil monsters, potential girlfriend is kidnapped by corrupt organization, etc. The animation itself is fluid and well drawn, though things take a turn for the worst near the film's climax when some very blatant re-use of footage becomes painfully evident.





In 1993 Dark Image Entertainment released an English subtitled version of *Guyver: Out of Control* on VHS in both North America and Canada. The OVA has long since gone out-of-print and, as of yet, has never officially made it onto DVD outside of Japan.



*Guyver: Out of Control* VHS Cover

A 12 episode OVA followed in 1989, titled *The Guyver: Bio-Booster Armor*. The anime was released onto VHS in Japan and was imported onto home video in the United States, dubbed in English, under the now defunct U.S. Renditions label back in 1992. Manga Entertainment would go on to re-release the episodes onto VHS in the mid '90s and then once again bring them to DVD by the early '00s.



*Bio-Booster Armor* 1992 VHS



*Bio-Booster Armor* 2003 DVD

The *Bio-Booster Armor* series represented Takaya's manga to a greater extent than *Out of Control* ever did. The animation was even slicker and the 12 episode-span allowed for more character development and a closer representation of the story's plotlines. Regardless, there was still some significant changes from the source material, including the order in which certain events occurred. In a few instances, entire subplots were dissolved while new ones had been added, though the 'feel' of the manga was left very much intact. In the end, the anime retold the initial five volumes of the *Guyver* manga, albeit in a somewhat condensed format.

## LIVE-ACTION RUMBLE

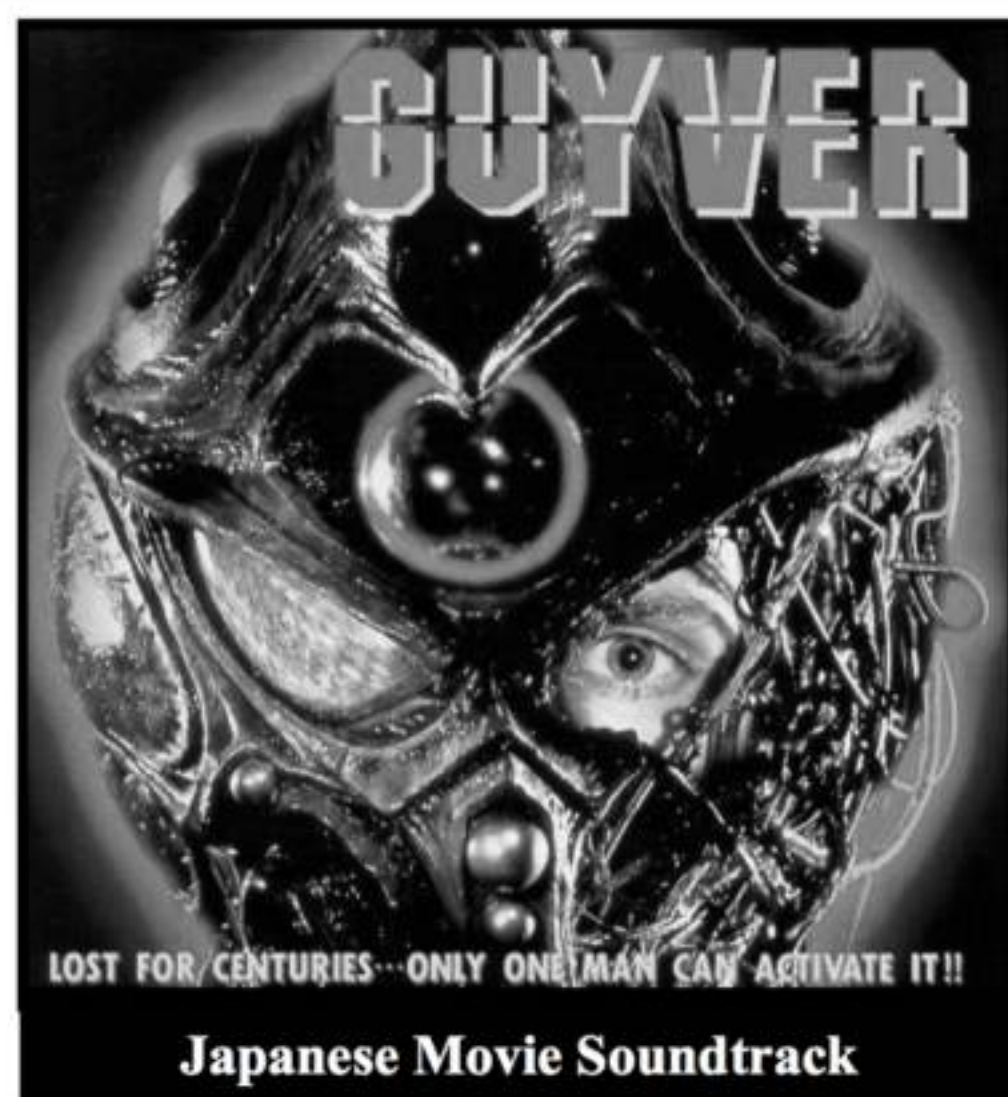
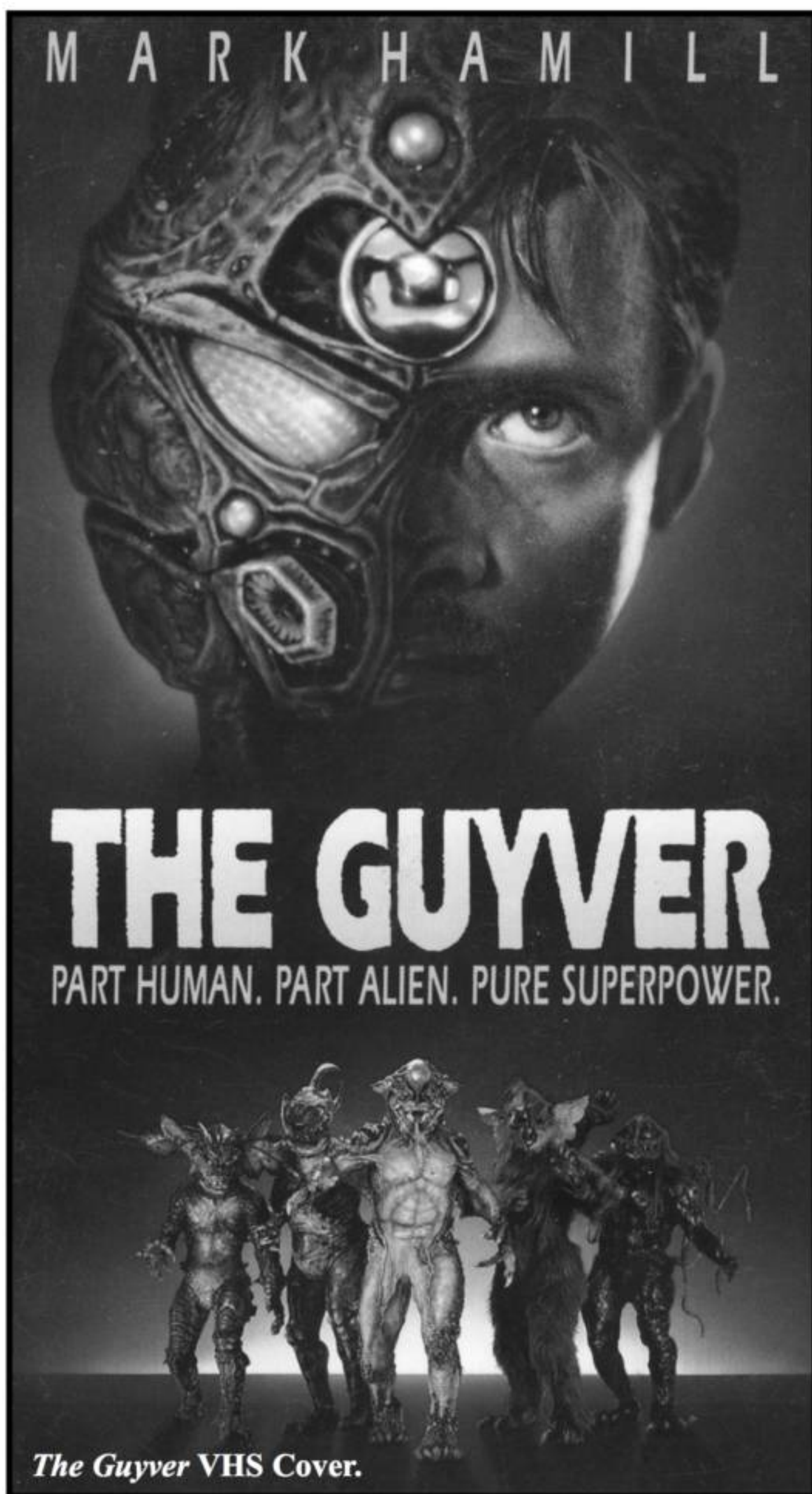
By 1991 Japan's bio-boostered hero made the transition from manga and anime to the coveted realm of live-action. Ironically, the film was produced by an American studio; all the more surprising was, at the time, North America had very limited familiarity with Takaya's characters. Back in the late '80s and early '90s most Western fans were forced to purchase expensive bootlegs of their favorite anime, many of which weren't dubbed into English and, in some cases, weren't even subtitled. Those that *were* subtitled often suffered from poor translations. Of course, this all changed following the anime boom of the late '90s. Aside from companies like Harmony Gold, Streamline, and barely a handful of others, anime had been an underground interest for the majority of the 1980s and 1990s with only shows like *Robotech* being aired on television and technical milestones in the vein of *Akira* receiving any real acclaim outside of the fanbase.

In retrospect, the *Guyver* was an odd choice for an American film company to bank on, considering the status of the anime genre at the time. Yet, New Line Cinema took

a chance. Though New Line had formed back in 1967, they spent the better part of two decades as a relatively small studio when compared to the likes of Warner Brothers or Paramount. New Line's biggest claim-to-fame in the '80s was the long-running *Nightmare on Elm Street* series. New Line Cinema really pulled in the profits during 1990, due mostly to the blockbuster success of the *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles* live-action film.

One could only guess that the huge financial returns attributed to the *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles* had sparked the bigwigs at New Line to consider other comic book/cartoon related properties of a similar tone. While the *Guyver* was far more violent, gory, and adult in nature than even the original black-and-white *Ninja Turtle* comics, *both* franchises consisted of colorful





mutants, martial arts action, and a sci-fi edge. Apparently that was deemed to be enough to secure a winning formula.

*The Guyver* was released direct-to-video almost exactly a year after the *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles* film came out. It was the directorial debut of not one but two creative individuals: Steve Wang and Screaming Mad George. Neither were strangers to special effects or creature-driven films. Prior to helming *The Guyver*, Steve Wang had worked in various Hollywood special effects departments, including under the tutelage of Rick Baker and Stan Winston, and had added his unique touch to *Harry and the Hendersons*, *Predator*, *The Monster Squad*, *Hell Comes to Frogtown*, *A Nightmare on Elm Street 5: The Dream Child*, and *Gremlins 2: The New Batch*. Screaming Mad George had also made a name for himself working in special effects, particularly on *Predator*, *Hide and Go Shriek*, *A Nightmare on Elm Street 4: The Dream Master*, *The Bite*, and *Bride of Re-Animator*.

Together, Steve Wang and Screaming Mad George put their creative talents together to create not only the Guyver's trademark design (which to their credit looks like it leapt straight off a page of the manga), but also the menacing Zonoids. Few could say that the film lacks impressive creature effects, despite *The Guyver* being shot on a limited budget. It's refreshing to watch *The Guyver* and witness creatures that appear to be flesh and blood instead of the overdone workings of CGI.

Upon its release *The Guyver* had garnered mixed reviews. Fans of the manga and anime were upset that elements of the original story had been cast aside and that the film took a campier, light-hearted approach to the source material. *The Guyver* had settled for a PG-13 rating, effectively eliminating much of the hardcore violence found in a typical issue of the manga or an episode of the anime.

Other fans were disappointed that new characters were added, instead of focusing on those already established in the manga. There were also many alterations, one of which was the main character, Sho Fukamachi, now renamed Sean Barker, who was changed from a high school student to being enrolled in college. Despite the criticisms and the fact that *The Guyver* was Americanized for a Western audience, it still retained *some* of the spirit of its Japanese counterpart.

Overall, regardless of its flaws, *The Guyver* is a fun romp – though somewhat hindered by many cheesy moments where unnecessary humor is implanted in favor of the story's darker themes. Sean Barker, who later becomes the Guyver, is played by Jack Armstrong in a very forgettable performance. Armstrong's acting chops never seem to convince the viewer of the highly fantastical events and, in short, he only makes the story all the more unbelievable.

Though, surprisingly, *The Guyver* features a rather



varied range of recognizable faces. Mark Hamill is the most famous of the bunch, playing CIA agent Max Reed, who does his best to chew up the scenery at every opportunity. It's worth pointing out that both the VHS and current DVD cover depict half of the Guyver's face lined up next to half of Hamill's, giving the unsuspecting masses the idea that Mark Hamill plays the title character. This is the furthest thing from the truth when one actually watches the film, but in the world of marketing one can see how that could be a potential 'draw'.

Playing one of the lead Zoanoids is Michael Berryman, an actor any horror fan should be familiar with. Berryman portrayed the iconic role of Pluto, the rampaging backwoods savage in Wes Craven's *The Hills Have Eyes* (1977), while also appearing in countless other films such as *Weird Science*, *Star Trek IV: The Voyage Home*, *Beastmaster 2: Through the Portal of Time*, and *The Devil's Rejects*, just to name a few.

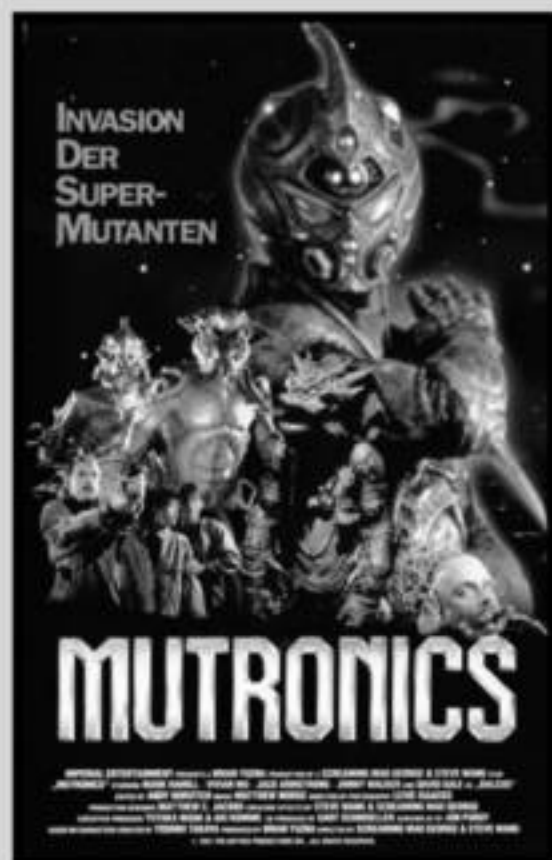
Two alumni from the cult film *Re-Animator* make appearances, including Jeffrey Combs who portrays the quirky Dr. East – an obvious word play on his character's name from *Re-Animator*, Dr. Herbert West. Combs' *Re-Animator* co-star, David Gale, fills out the role as menacing founder of the Chronos Corporation, Fulton Balcus, who will do anything to possess the Guyver unit.

In one of the film's more interesting casting choices, Jimmie Walker (best known for his role as J.J. Evans in the popular '70s comedy sitcom *Good Times*) plays Striker, a jive-talking, rapping Zoanoid. Those familiar with *Good Times* will surely be aware of the in-joke when Walker, in Zoanoid form, utters J.J. Evan's trademark catch phrase, "DY-NO-MITE!"

Last but not least, scream queen, Linnea Quigley (*Graduation Day*, *The Return of the Living Dead*, *Night of the Demons*) makes an appearance, though practically playing herself, during one of the film's cheesiest scenes.

#### A GUYVER BY ANY OTHER NAME

Despite being based off an existing manga and anime series, *The Guyver* was re-titled *Mutronics* in the U.K., France, Denmark, Germany, and Finland. Perhaps the strangest title alteration was in Greece, where it was called *Alien Cop*.



*The Guyver's* greatest fault is an apparent confusion as to who its audience should be. There's certainly enough blood and gore to raise it above a PG rating, but not enough to earn it a solid R. Regardless, the film has an overt horror/sci-fi quality but seems to meander between who it wants to appeal to: a younger crowd, *Guyver* fans, or 'B movie' horror enthusiasts? At the end of the day, the film is based-off a more adult manga and anime than say, *Dragonball Z*, but isn't quite to the level of staggering

#### ONE HECK OF A GUY-VER

*The Guyver* was nominated for an International Fantasy Film Award for 'Best Film' at the 1993 Fantasporto Film Festival in Portugal.



The Guyver, ready for his Hollywood close-up.



Michael Berryman as Lisker, agent of Chronos.



Lisker in Zoanoid form with his companions.



"DY-NO-MITE!"



violence that *Fist of the North Star* reaches. Too bad the unnecessary and unwarranted humor often overshadows much of the film.

While *The Guyver* gets a lot of criticism (some of it rightfully so), the film does do an exceptional job, all things considered. It's truer to the source material than many other anime shows that were given the American live-action treatment. For those who've seen the mid '90s *Fist of the North Star* starring Gary Daniels and the 2009 box-office bomb, *Dragonball: Evolution*, there can be no question as to what a *truly* bad adaptation could have been. In the grand scheme, adaptation wise, *The Guyver* stands as a superior end-product than even some of America's very own comic-to-screen efforts. *Elektra*, *Punisher: War Zone*, and *Jonah Hex* are only a few recent examples of great comics turned into horrible films.



### DIRECTOR'S CUTS

Despite the claim on *The Guyver's* DVD cover to be a so-called 'Director's Cut', it's actually far from the truth. The DVD features many edits and alterations from the VHS version. The MPAA (Motion Picture Association of America) has become stricter with their rating system in recent years, so in order for *The Guyver* to retain its PG-13 rating, a number of re-edits had to be made for the 2004 DVD release. While bits of additional dialogue was added to the Director's Cut, along with an odd text-scroll at the beginning, a number of the film's more violent scenes were trimmed significantly to remove shots of blood or gore (such as a Zoanoid's head being crushed, the Guyver ripping a Zoanoid's arm out of its socket, and a neck snapping). The original VHS version runs 92 minutes while the DVD clocks in at only 88 minutes.

### A RETURN TO FORM

What *The Guyver* lacked in critical acclaim, it made up for in financial returns, thereby sparking interest for a sequel. New Line set the wheels in motion and *The Guyver 2: Dark Hero* was released direct-to-video in 1994. The follow-up abandoned the campier tongue-in-cheek moments from the first outing in favor of a serious, darker tone. The Zoanoids became more threatening than ever before and the fight scenes were intricate martial art spectacles. Even the Guyver's suit underwent a complete makeover, becoming sleeker and more defined. While the

prior film had settled on a PG-13 rating, the sequel was rated R – allowing for more bloodshed and gore.

Screaming Mad George departed for the sequel, leaving Steve Wang to take over directing duties alone. Behind the scenes even more changes were made. Jon Purdy who served as screenwriter for *The Guyver* was replaced by Nathan Long for *Dark Hero*. Another major shift occurred in front of the camera – Jack Armstrong was recast as the Guyver's unwilling host, Sean Barker. Stepping into the role would be David Hayter, who has since gained quite a bit of fame in the video game world as the voice of the resilient Solid Snake in the

*Metal Gear Solid* franchise. Hayter has also earned a reputation as an accomplished screenwriter, going on to pen the scripts for *X-Men*, *X2*, *The Scorpion King*, and *Watchmen*. Most recently, Hayter has started his own production company, fittingly called *Dark Hero Studios*.



In every way imaginable *The Guyver 2: Dark Hero* surpasses the first film, even the plot is more consistent with Takaya's manga. The premise follows Sean Barker as he tries to uncover more information about the Guyver unit that has symbiotically bonded to him, overtaking his life and forcing him to dispatch all things evil (the opening scene has the Guyver taking out a gang of thugs – which, although might be a bit of a divergence from the manga, is still fun to watch). Struggling with his now tortured psyche, Sean is led to an archaeological dig in Utah where an alien ship has been discovered. It's not long before the Chronos Corporation makes an appearance and Zoanoids abound in full force. Extra points go to *Dark Hero* for incorporating a second Guyver unit that ultimately bonds with Crane, the lead Zoanoid. The climatic high-energy battle is, alone, worth the price of admission.





**New adventure, new Zoanoids.**

For its modest \$900,000 budget, *The Guyver 2: Dark Hero* is a testament to the value of old-school special effects. The film was met with a much more positive reception than its predecessor; even *Entertainment Weekly's* Glenn Kenny gave the film a B+, stating that, "*Dark Hero* takes on a goofy hallucinogenic air that's genuinely amusing if you're in the right frame of mind."

## BACK TO BASICS

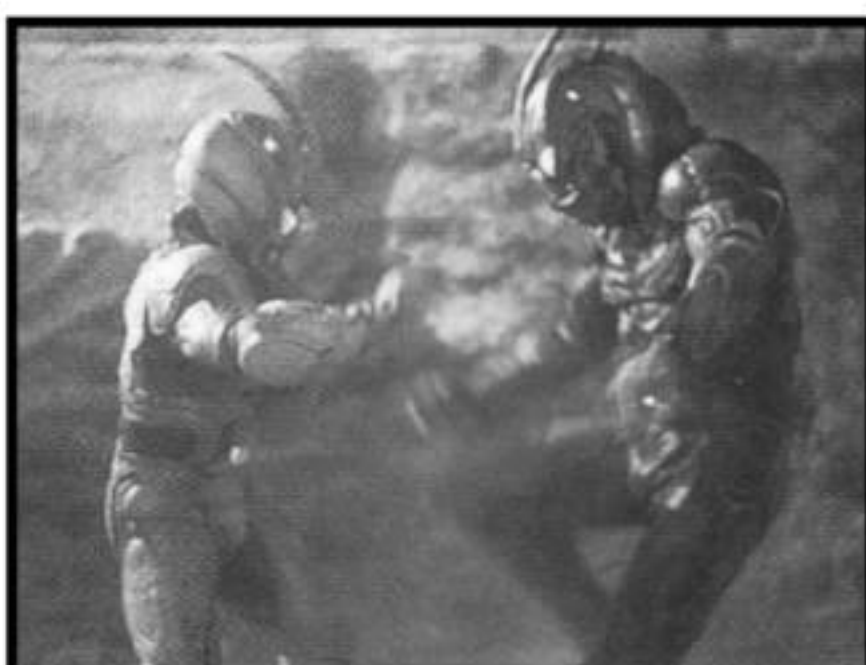
Sadly, for fans of the live-action Guyver installments, a third film never materialized. By the late '90s interest in the Bio-Boosted hero cooled off, leaving only the manga to provide ongoing storylines. That changed in 2005 when a new anime series hit the Japanese airwaves. Produced by ADV Films and Kadokawa Shoten, *Guyver: The Bio-Boosted Armor* spanned 26 episodes, covering the first 10 volumes of the original manga.

Despite some changes to the source material and a few characters undergoing stylized revampings, fans will not find a more accurate representation of the Guyver outside of Takaya's original manga. The series is a true delight for purists, coupled with beautiful animation and no shortage of the violence Guyver-followers are accustomed to.

As of 2011 there is no word on a future Guyver



**David Hayter side-by-side with his alter-ego.**



**Guyver vs. Guyver?!**

series or any new live-action ventures. Fortunately we still have Takaya's manga, which is now currently being published and shows no signs of slowing down. As for another Guyver anime, the potential is always there. A continuation of the 2005 series, which ended rather abruptly, would be a pleasant surprise, though with each passing year a sequel appears more and more unlikely. In regard to a current live-action film, with Hollywood's constant outpouring of remakes, reboots, and sequels, maybe a new installment of the Guyver isn't such a pipe dream. Certainly there's more than one fan who would welcome a faithful big-budget incarnation of Japan's out of control hero.





# ONE MAN ARMY

Throughout the manga, anime, and live-action films, the Guyver has utilized a wild assortment of weaponry. Here we take a look at a selection of his impressive arsenal.



## HYPER SENSE

The Guyver has a pair of metallic orbs affixed to his head. These function as external sensors that indicate any surrounding danger which might be outside his line-of-sight. Hyper Sense is a handy little feature that has aided the Guyver in a number of confrontations.

## HEAD BEAM



Atop the Guyver's Control Metal is a laser emitting device known as the Head Beam. It has multi-directional capabilities and could even be split into *multiple* lasers. It's been used frequently in the anime and was used to great success in *Guyver 2: Dark Hero*, when the Guyver uses dual Head Beams to blind a Zoanoid before going in for the kill.

## HIGH FREQUENCY SONIC SWORDS



Sword-like blades that can extend at varying length from the Guyver's forearms. They emit a high frequency resonance that allows them to cut through any material known to exist.

## SONIC BUSTER

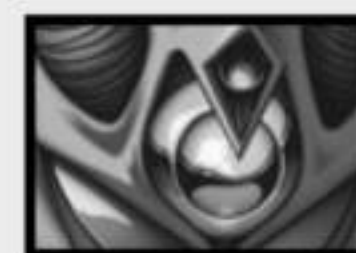


Twin orbs that form at the Guyver's mouth. They can unleash a sonic blast that literally disintegrates an opponent on the molecular level.



## GUYVER UNIT

Guyver unit prior to engaging with a host.



## CONTROL METAL

The single most important aspect of the Guyver unit. A databank of sorts, the Control Metal is a spherical device on the Guyver's forehead that regulates energy between the organism and the host. At its core, the fundamental purpose of the Control Metal is to contain the genetic material of the unit's host; should the host be maimed or killed, the Control Metal is able to regenerate and/or repair any damage. Only the smallest bits of genetic material is required for this 'self-repair' phase. The Control Metal also acts as a signal to activate the Guyver's armor from a sub-space dimension. However, should the Control Metal be damaged, the alien parasite that makes up the Guyver Unit will *eat* its host alive.

## MEGA-SMASHER



When the Guyver is intent on doling out massive punishment, he turns to his most powerful weapon. The Mega-Smasher is a particle beam cannon housed beneath the Guyver's chest armor. By pulling apart both chest plates he is able to unleash one of the most formidable weapons in the known universe. Few of the Guyver's enemies have been able to resist its power.

## GRAVITY ORB



A component of the Guyver's armor that channels energy, allowing for flight and an assortment of offensive gravity beams and defensive energy shields.



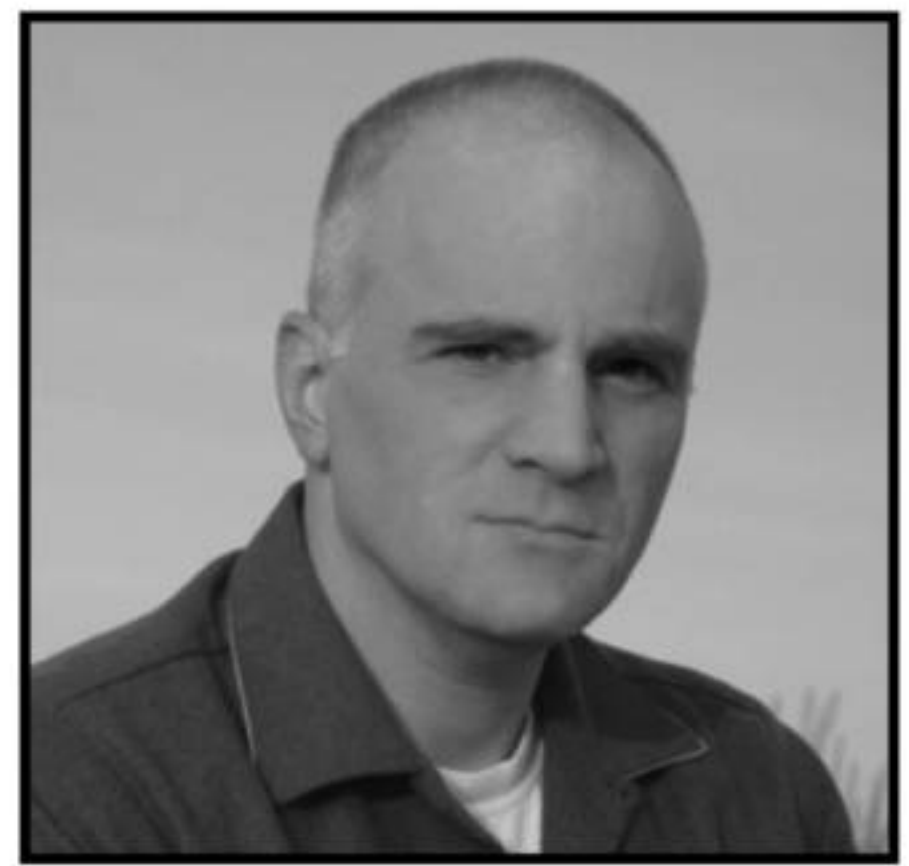
# THE GUYVER



# INTERVIEW

with **NATHAN LONG**

## SCREENWRITER OF **GUYVER 2: DARK HERO**



Nathan Long is certainly no stranger to the realm of fantasy. Aside from penning the screenplay for *The Guyver 2: Dark Hero*, Mr. Long has worked as head writer on the *Kamen Rider Dragon Knight* television series and has written an impressive number of award-winning short stories and novels. His current series of *Warhammer* novels have been met with critical acclaim and are highly regarded among genre fans.

**SHADOWLAND MAGAZINE:** First off, how did you become involved as the screenwriter for *The Guyver 2: Dark Hero*?

**NATHAN LONG:** It all started with one of my very rare displays ofchutzpah. I had seen an article in *Film Threat Magazine* about Steve Wang and his movie *Kung Fu Rascals*, and liked what he was doing so much that I weaseled his phone number out of Chris Gore, *FT*'s publisher, and cold called him. We ended up having a two hour geek-fest conversation about kung-fu and fantasy/sci-fi movies and really hit it off, and that led to us working on some scripts together. Sadly, those scripts never went anywhere, but when Steve got the call from Japan, asking him if he wanted to direct a sequel to *Guyver*, Steve very kindly called me and asked me to write it.

**SM:** Prior to working on *The Guyver 2: Dark Hero*, were you familiar with the Guyver character, either through the Japanese anime or manga?

**NL:** I had never read or watched either, but I worked at a comic book store at the time, so I was aware of them.



**SM:** Many Guyver fans consider *The Guyver 2: Dark Hero* to be superior to the original film and appreciate the darker tone and atmosphere of *Dark Hero*, along with its faithfulness to the anime. How much free reign were you allowed when writing the script, and do you recall if there were any restrictions and/or requirements placed upon you by the director or producers?

**NL:** Steve may remember this differently, but I don't recall the producers getting involved very much at all. Basically they gave us some money, said "Make it better than the first one," and left us alone. Steve, on the other hand, was very conscious that the first *Guyver* had been too camp, and really wanted to make this one truer to the dark mood of the original, so he asked me to keep the comedy to a minimum and pump up the drama. We worked very hard to put in lots of intrigue and adventure and give it a satisfying and action packed ending. I'm very pleased to hear that fans of the original feel we succeeded.



**SM:** As a writer, was it a challenge to jump into the sequel and work with already established mythos of the characters and their world?

**NL:** I had to do a bunch of homework, and we didn't have the internet back then, so I couldn't just look it all up on Wikipedia. I watched some of the anime, and read some of the manga. Mostly, however, I got my background from Steve, who was a big fan of the originals, and knew it backwards and forwards. A bigger challenge was trying to make the sequel match both the first movie, *and* the source material.

**SM:** Were there any sequences written for *The Guyver 2: Dark Hero* that were ultimately cut during filming?





**NL:** I'm afraid it's been way too long. I don't really remember. Steve is very conscious of budget, however, and rarely suggests any scene that he knows he's not going to be able to afford to shoot.

**SM:** Do you recall if at any time there were plans for a third Guyver film?

**NL:** There was some talk of it, but if I remember correctly, the producers wanted to give us less money for a more ambitious idea, and Steve decided it wasn't worth the aggravation. I know some other guys (Brian Yusna maybe?) had plans to do it at one point, but that didn't happen either.

**SM:** Recently you've worked as head writer on the *Kamen Rider Dragon Knight* television series. Much like the Guyver, Kamen Rider is a popular Japanese character. Can you tell us a little about your experience working on that series?

**NL:** Working on *KRDK* was an absolute blast. It was hard work, and drove me crazy at times, but putting together the story from start to finish and seeing it come to life on the TV was fantastic.

Once again Steve called me when he got the job to direct and produce it, and we spent a few months getting the story together and laying out the arc of the episodes before production began. Once things got started I was working 12 hours a day on it, and Steve was working 17 hours a day. He slept on set and in the editing rooms.

I had a team of three writers, and between us we cranked out 40 scripts, with many crazy rewrites for budget, time or actor problems. (For instance, we had an actress leave the show right before we started shooting the last ten episodes, and suddenly had to write her out of the storyline.) The hardest part was taking all the fight footage from the original Japanese series and making them fit into a new storyline.

All in all, it was a great experience, and I am very proud of what we managed to accomplish with little time and fewer resources.

**SM:** Steve Wang's special effects work is nothing short of legendary, though he's proved through *The Guyver* films that he's also a very capable director. What was it like working with him?

**NL:** Steve is a great guy with a sharp, sarcastic sense of humor and an incredible work ethic. He is the hardest working man in show business, and drives himself hard. He also drives the people he works with hard, and it can be pretty demanding working on a project with him, but if you can keep up, it's a great and thrilling ride.

I enjoy working with Steve a lot, because we speak the same language, and have similar understandings of plot, character and action. We also complement each other's strengths and weaknesses. Steve has an instinctive feel for what works dramatically, and will always call bullshit if I haven't hit the right notes with a scene or sequence. On the other hand, Steve doesn't always know how to get across the things he wants to express. That's where I come in. I can put into words the visuals and the emotions in his head. We argue a lot, but it's always good natured, and it always makes for a better story.

**SM:** Congratulations on winning the Scribe Award at this year's Comic Con for your novel, *Bloodborn: Ulrika the Vampire*! You've made a number of notable contributions to the Warhammer series of novels. Are you currently working on a new novel in the series, or are there any other projects that you would like to tell us about?

**NL:** Thank you very much! *Bloodforged*, the sequel to *Bloodborn*, is out on shelves now, and I have just finished writing the third book in the series, *Bloodsworn*. Next on my plate is another *Warhammer* novel, entitled *Deathmaster*, and I've also got some personal projects I'm working on (a novel, a screenplay, a comic book series) which I'm not yet quite ready to talk about in detail. All I can say is that 2012 should be a very interesting year for me.



*Shadowland Magazine would like to thank Nathan Long for taking the time to speak with us. For those who wish to stay up-to-date on Mr. Long's work, his website is [www.sabrepunk.com](http://www.sabrepunk.com)*



# DARK HEROES

The term 'superhero' might not suit the Guyver, at least not in classic comic book terminology. Sure, he originated from the comic page and he selflessly combats the forces of evil, not unlike Batman or Spider-Man. Yet, the Guyver is more akin to that of a living-weapon; his methods are brutal, to the point of displaying what can only be described as 'ultra-violence' upon his enemies. Batman might tangle with the Joker time and again, and Spider-Man may confront Doctor Octopus or the Lizard so many times a year, but the Guyver rarely encounters the same foe twice. Why? Because he leaves pieces of them strewn about (unless, of course, he vaporizes them altogether with his Mega-Smasher). The Guyver is still very much a hero, but in the Rambo vein, favoring lethal force over restraint.

While Yoshiaki Takaya's long-lasting *Guyver* manga may have been somewhat tamer than what would typically be found in an issue of the adult-themed Japanese magazine, *Lemon People*, it was still of a harder-edge than many mainstream American comics of the mid '80s. Of course, there are always a few exceptions. Here's a list of some notable American comics that *really* pushed the envelope back in the '80s and '90s.

## *The Saga of the Swamp Thing* (1982)

First published in 1972, *Swamp Thing* blended the best elements of horror and fantasy until 24 issues later when, in 1976, the comic was cancelled because of dwindling sales. By 1982 Wes Craven's *Swamp Thing* film had sparked renewed interest in the DC Comics character, urging a re-imagining of the story in the form of *The Saga of the Swamp Thing*. From the start, the title

pushed the boundaries of the average comic and embraced a number of spiritual elements, along with horrific imagery and adult stories. This eventually led *The Saga of the Swamp Thing* to abandon the much-maligned Comics Code Authority, becoming one of the first mainstream comics to go without an 'approved' seal on their covers.



the Turtles squarely into a kid's phenomenon, complete with popular topline and unfathomable amounts of merchandising, the original black-and-white comic by Kevin Eastman and Peter Laird spared nothing in the way of violence, blood, and edgy storylines. Those acquainted solely with the partying, pizza-loving, "cowabunga" shouting amphibians should take a look at the less-colorful origins of these ninjutsu-skilled mutant teens.

***Batman: The Dark Knight Returns* (1986)** Frank Miller added fuel to the argument that comic books weren't just



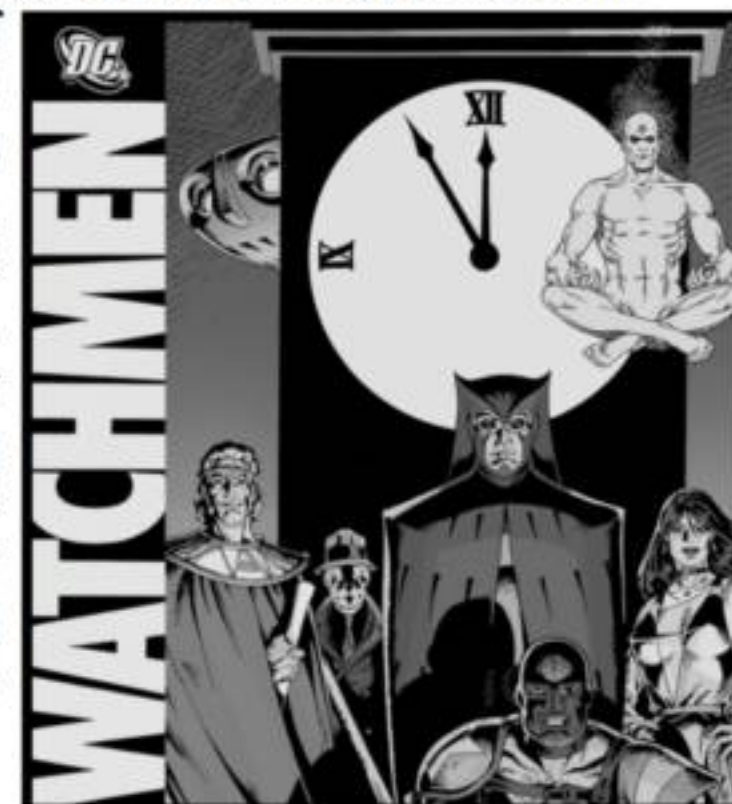
for kids, but could also have a mature sensibility that reflected social issues, morality, and an entire spectrum of hard-hitting themes. Miller proved his point by plunging readers into a dark, grimy film-noir world of one of the most famous characters in comicdom. A year later he would follow up *The Dark Knight Returns* with *Batman: Year One*. Elements of Miller's Batman can be seen in both the Tim Burton *Batman* films and the latest Christopher Nolan outings.



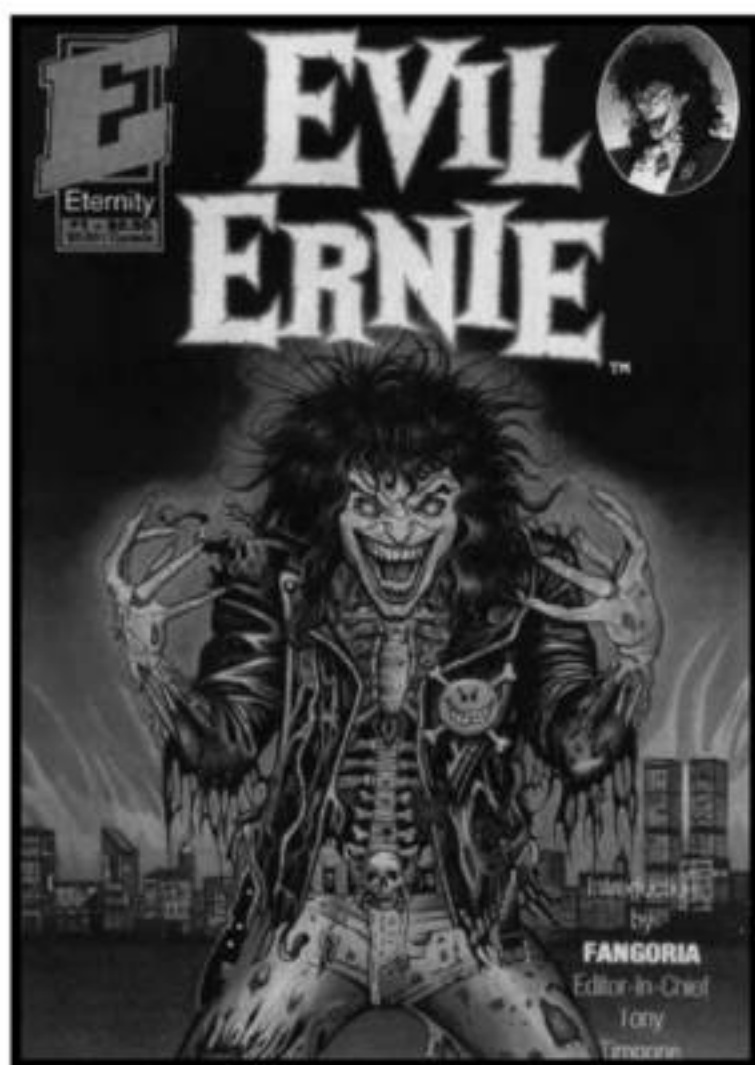
## *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles* (1984)

The Ninja Turtles might seem like an odd addition to a list of grim and gritty comics if one was only familiar with the '80s/'90s cartoon. While the animated s h o w transformed

***Watchmen* (1986)** Writer Alan Moore and artist Dave Gibbons changed the face of the comic industry forever with *Watchmen*. The story was one of the first to examine the inner-workings of superheroes that weren't so super. In fact, aside from the blue-skinned Dr. Manhattan, none of the heroes had any 'powers'. Forget Spider-Man or Superman, the characters in *Watchmen* were some of the most psychologically disturbed (i.e. human) characters to ever be put to the comic page.







**Evil Ernie (1991)** For a long time the term 'comic book' would be equated with colorfully costumed heroes taking on the never-ending forces of evil. It was a belief that could be easily disproven with Eternity Comics' premiere issue of *Evil Ernie*. Instead of a heroic title character, or even an anti-hero, readers were brought into the mind of Ernest Fairchild, an abused child, who is later endowed with supernatural powers, becoming Evil Ernie. As

his name implies, he certainly wasn't out stopping muggers. Ernie's plans soon transition from killing as many people as he possibly could, to instigating Megadeath – an end-game scenario that would wipe out all life on Earth through mutually assured nuclear destruction. Ok, sure, how many *other* psychotic villains in comic fandom have tried to carry out similar deeds? The only difference is Evil Ernie actually accomplished it.

### **Spawn (1992)**

Todd McFarlane may have made a name for himself for his work on *Spider-Man*, but he turned his name into a trademark with *Spawn*. The '90s proved to be a turning point for comics, propelling the industry into an even darker/edgier realm. *Spawn* is a perfect example, focusing on a bloodthirsty mercenary who is killed, sent to hell, and makes a deal with the devil, becoming a super-powered anti-hero in the process. Whatever happened to radioactive spiders and emerald rings?



**The Death of Superman (1992)** It wasn't kryptonite that killed the Man of Steel but the monstrous brute force of Doomsday that dealt the final blow. Though the DC Comics event has been called a 'publicity stunt' by some (others even claimed that it led to the mid '90s comic decline), there is no doubting that it was one of Superman's

darkest adventures. While other comic heroes have met their demise, few have earned the media attention that Superman had for his dramatic otherworldly departure. All of the DC Universe mourned their fallen hero as seen in the subsequent *Funeral for a Friend* arc.



### **Spider-Man: Maximum Carnage (1993)**

Marvel's *Spider-Man* titles never really probed too deep into the gritty underbelly of the superhero's world and kept moral quandaries to a minimum. However, 1993's *Maximum Carnage* was – and still is – one of the darkest storylines in Spider-Man's exciting comic book history. The plot followed the super-powered villain Carnage, who, after breaking out of an asylum, went on a murderous rampage around New York City

and managed to kill hundreds of innocent civilians. In the midst of all the chaos, Spider-Man was forced to question his ethics and principals – would he willingly kill Carnage if it meant saving countless more lives? The *Maximum Carnage* story arc spread throughout every Spider-Man title, from *Amazing*, *Spectacular*, *Ultimate*, to *Web* and featured guest appearances by Venom, the Black Cat, Deathlok, Iron Fist, and Captain America, among many others.



### **Batman: Knightfall (1993)**

The Dark Knight's darkest hour came in '93 during the *Knightfall* storyline. The plot starts out with Bruce Wayne considering that he's 'lost his edge' as the costumed crime-fighter, coupled with a psychological mid-life crisis and driven to the brink of exhaustion. The situation culminates in *Batman* #497 when Bane breaks Batman's back, turning the Caped-Crusader into a paraplegic. If this wasn't gloomy enough already, things get worst when Batman's

replacement, Azrael, turns out to be as disturbed as some of Arkham's worst and not beneath killing a few villains here and there.



# TWO-HEADED BEAST

An Attempt to Find the Difference Between True Horror and Slasher Films!

By Flynn Cook

Stop me if you've heard this one before: Renfield has arrived at a European castle late in the night, brought by a strange coach. Once inside, he walks towards a large staircase and is surprised to see somebody coming down the stairs toward him. Expecting a nobleman, Renfield is instead aghast to see the imposing figure is dressed raggedly, wearing a Hockey mask and holding a machete. Renfield books it out the door and into the woods, while the figure continues after him slowly, an odd hushing sound repeating on the soundtrack. After running haphazardly for a few moments, Renfield stops and turns, looking around for signs of his pursuer, backing up into a solid figure. Scared again, he turns and finds the Hockey-masked killer, who proceeds to use that machete to cut him in half at the waist. Blood splashes everywhere and the hushed tones on the soundtrack are met with a low-frequency synth sound.

You haven't heard that one? Well, that's because it doesn't exist! Todd Browning's 1931 classic *Dracula* isn't a Slasher film, it's a horror film. In this example, what was once a tense scene filled with an unsettling atmosphere and a gothic mood has now become a sequence built upon a quick scare and gore. Which is not to belittle the genre, but let's face it: there's a lot of people out there these days that lump the two genres into each other, and sadly, at the expense of horror, have made Slashers the dominant horror genre to date. While there certainly is overlap (obviously there are horrifying things in Slashers), a disservice is done to the source genre when it's cheapened in that way.

But what's the difference? How do you deduce it,

and how do you describe it? Oh, there's overlap. Being a subgenre of Horror, Slasher films will clearly share a lot in common with its bigger brother, but that genre that has so

quickly defined 'modern horror' has its own telltale signs. Let's take a look at one of my personal favorites: 1963's *The Haunting*. Four observers staying in a notoriously haunted house to record the creepy goings-on; nothing is actually seen, no ghosts, no ghouls and no gore. Outside of a bending door, the film's true scares come from the mood. There's an eerie vibe at the house when the sun goes down and the area is deserted. The horror is situational. It's all in the mind; in the tension: the not-knowing and the overall subtlety of it all.



Now, let's think about *Friday the 13th*. Sex-crazed teenagers hoping to re-open a defunct lakeside summer camp are being stalked by a murderer overnight. While elements of traditional Horror concepts remain, the payoff is not subtle, it's not in the mind, and it relies on shock to help make it more effective. This is not a knock on the film, but the conventions that *Friday the*





13th displays are notorious. Terrorized youth, fake scares, and sudden kills. These are three things that are most prominent in Slasher films. Whereas I think it's correct to say that True Horror films draw their scares from the situation and the ideas, Slashers draw their scares from the visceral.

And then, there are the characters. Going back to *Dracula*, let's go further with that classic horror icon. While the layman may lump Bela Lugosi's Count Dracula in with characters like Leatherface, this is clearly a mistake and it goes back to the average viewer not really understanding the difference between the two. Exhibit A: The Wolfman, Frankenstein's Monster, the Creature from the Black Lagoon, Hill House and even *The Thing*. Exhibit B: Freddy Krueger, Jason Voorhees, Chucky, Ghostface, Pinhead and Jigsaw. To the uninitiated, would there even be a difference?

One set is truly evil. One set is consequentially evil. *Dracula* is a jerk, but the most horrifying thing about him? He's a Vampire. Well, can we really begrudge Drac for just trying to survive, or *The Thing* for that matter? Frankenstein's Monster isn't evil; he's just, as the name implies, a monster. The Wolfman can't help himself, and the Phantom of the Opera is just misunderstood. Freddy, Leatherface, Chucky and Jigsaw on the other hand? They're just cruel. They're evil and they love it. They're out to inflict as much murder and torture



franchises in the fact that it still very much relies on mood and its atmosphere to reach its climactic moments, but it's let down into the Slasher genre by its villain and its reliance on the quick, visceral kills. That's probably the greatest difference between the two: vicerality and subtlety.



Why is it so easy to write and produce so many *Puppet Master* and *Leprechaun* sequels? Or *Saw* sequels and other "torture-porn" flicks, for that matter? They turn a fast, loose profit because of their throwaway interest. I feel that Slasher films as a genre lend themselves to this kind of outlook and goal because of their focus of the visceral almost exclusively. In his critique of Slasher films, the film *Scream*, Wes Craven points out the obvious: Slasher films are obvious, easy to predict and cheap. In an attempt to be meta-textual, Craven ended up just creating a new franchise in the very mold of that which he was poking fun at. With quick startles and typically throwaway characters, the visceral, tensionless style that many Slasher films

fall into can be a world away from the subtle eeriness of True Horror films.

Slasher films are not without their horrific bits, though. I cannot deny that the *Nightmare on Elm Street* series is unlike other slasher

fall into can be a world away from the subtle eeriness of True Horror films.

Going back to *A Nightmare on Elm Street* (the original, not the remake), there is a contrast to many Slasher films later to come. We empathize with and worry for the lead characters, which is a key component of a True Horror film. While, as I mentioned before, its kills are more visceral than necessary, the film still manages to hang onto traditional horror conventions enough to set it apart from the faster, looser films of its ilk. Many believe



that it's what we don't see that is more horrific. The less we see about a villain's 'kill', the more fascinating it is and leaves us more uncertain as to the level of danger our heroes find themselves up against.

I have always found the mood provided by subtle films more effective. The tension created by the mystery of

people may want to see the best. When you really want to be scared, you want to be *scared*! And there are a lot of films in the genre that let themselves down, I feel. It's all one big gray area, true, as I mentioned before, there's a lot of bleed over between the Slasher and Horror subgenres. I just want people to be aware. I don't know – it's something that people have to find for themselves.

To be aware is to be afraid!



who-is and who-isn't a "thing" in John Carpenter's *The Thing* scares the pants off me each time I see the film. It isn't so much the creature itself, but the resultant fear of its simply existing. The feeling sticks with me after the film is over – and I don't find myself jumping at shadows when I'm done watching any Freddy or Jason flick.

What does it matter? It doesn't really. The point of this article is simply as a public service announcement

to be aware of what you're watching. Not in a censorship way, but just to, perhaps, have a higher quality standard. I think that for anyone that wants to see a horror film,



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# WILLIAM CASTLE ON TV: GHOST STORY



By Brett Taylor

William Castle is known as the gimmick master of the horror film, remembered for *Mr. Sardonicus*, *The House on Haunted Hill*, *Macabre*, and *The Tingler*. Not

mentioned so often is his contribution to supernatural TV, *Ghost Story*, which later became *Circle of Fear*.

On March 17, 1972 NBC showcased two potential shows, *Ghost Story* and *Movin' On*, on a special called *Double Play*. It was an odd pairing. *Movin' On*, featuring Claude Akins, hoped to capitalize on the trucker craze years ahead of *Smokey and the Bandit*. In *Ghost Story* bearded British actor Sebastian Cabot, who had just finished a five-year run on the popular *Family Affair*, appears as Winston Essex, a fellow who lives in a huge mansion called Mansfield House, which is full of guests and chandeliers. Cabot's narration introduces the Richard Matheson tale, "The New House," looking ominous in dark lighting, while Castle himself drops by for a jokey Hitchcockian cameo.

"The New House" tells the story of a couple who move into a haunted house built on top of the old hanging place, rather incongruously named Pleasant Hill. Sam Jaffe adds some color as the local historian who provides the necessary exposition. The tensest moment is the climax when a ghost appears during a thunderstorm, whispering "I want the baby." Director John Llewellyn Moxey added a touch of mildly Bavaesque eeriness to this

scene by having the ghost move in and out of shadow, its pale face only seen in glimpses. The downbeat ending finds the baby laughing maniacally at its mother, possessed by

the ghost. To add an extra note of grimness, Cabot reappears to tell us the mother is now a strange recluse.

Ratings must have been encouraging enough, for NBC gave Castle the go-ahead to produce the show on a regular basis. This is somewhat surprising, since the network was already running another supernatural program, *Rod Serling's Night Gallery*. Even ABC was running one of their own, *The Sixth Sense*, which differed in that it was not an anthology. Several *Sixth Sense* veterans showed up on *Ghost Story/Circle of Fear*, including director Richard Donner, writers Anthony Lawrence and Robert Specht, and composer Robert Prince. Matheson's involvement seems to have ended with "The New House." *Ghost Story's* credits list Matheson, noted for his contributions to *The Twilight Zone*, as having "developed" the show.

There is some reason to think Castle was inspired by the British show *Journey to the Unknown*, a collaboration between Hammer Studios and Twentieth Century-Fox. The show was hosted by Sebastian Cabot, who was hired to perform similar duties on *Ghost Story*. Castle was familiar with writer Robert Bloch, who had contributed to the British show, having employed him to write the scripts for his films



When it came to gimmicks, William Castle was always 'a-head' of his competition.



*Strait-Jacket* and *The Night Walker*. Nor would this be the first TV show on which Castle and Bloch collaborated. Their unlikeliest project had been *The Plot Thickens*, an unsold 1963 mystery-game show pilot with Groucho Marx. Bloch blamed the show's failure on Marx's ego.



**Sebastian Cabot**

Castle would also hire a prolific Hammer employee he knew, Jimmy Sangster, as a chief writer, though Sangster had no direct involvement with *Journey to the Unknown*. Cabot had appeared in two TV movies written by Sangster, which Sangster referred to as a "coincidence." The production company behind *Ghost Story* was Screen Gems, a division of Columbia, and their head was Seymour Friedman, who had once employed Sangster as his assistant director. It is also quite possible it was Bloch who suggested Cabot as host. Cabot had been enthusiastic about



**Robert Bloch**

launching a show in which he would play an occult investigator. The idea was nixed, only to turn up on the series *The Sixth Sense* as well as the pilots *The Eyes of Charles Sand* and *Baffled!* Bloch was understandably skeptical about this particular "coincidence."

In his book *Once Around the Bloch* the author claims Castle offered him the job of story editor. It is surprising that Bloch, whose

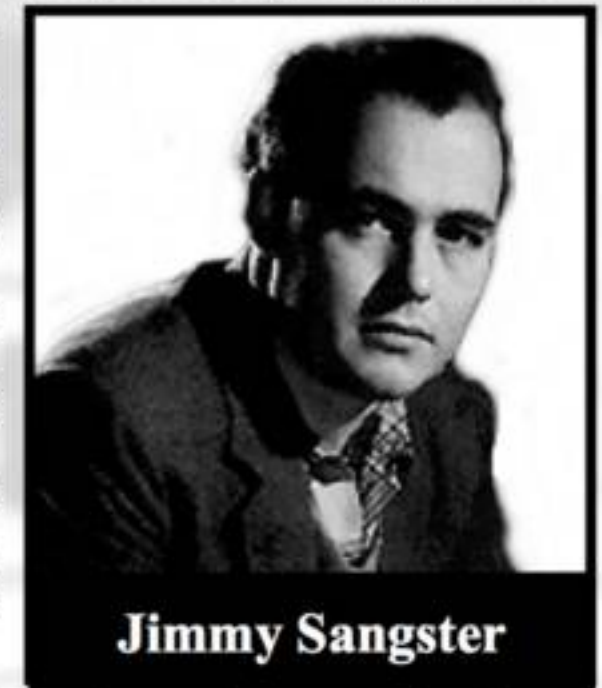
scripts tended to be for low budget movies, would turn down an offer as lucrative as this. Yet Bloch claimed that he turned it down because of the grueling schedule involved. It is also hard to believe Bloch's agent, Gerald Molson, wouldn't try to talk him into taking the job, but apparently he suggested that Bloch, rather than flatly reject the offer, ask for his salary to be doubled. They were surprised when the network agreed to this demand, and begged off.

In spite of Castle's generous offer, Bloch's recollections of the producer weren't particularly fond. Bloch, already unhappy with *The Night Walker*, was further disgruntled when Castle, whom he described as "a polar bear who smoked cigars," changed the sex of the evil main character in his script "House of Evil." The writer had hoped Bette Davis would play the role of the elderly witch in his story. When she proved unavailable Melvyn Douglas played the part. Since the role's main requirement was that the actor glower menacingly, it mattered little whether the character was a witch or a warlock, but Bloch was offended by the tinkering. He was more justified in his criticism of the title. He doesn't say what his original title was, but the one finally used, "House of Evil," makes no sense as it's the grandfather who is evil, not the house; the setting matters little in the story.

In this autobiography, Bloch refers to the show as *Ghost Stories*. It is possible this was the working title for the show, but it is also possible Bloch's memory was mistaken. Certainly Bloch makes an odd criticism of

Castle's treatment of his script, claiming that when the producer was done tinkering "the cookie-dolls no longer represented specific individuals. There went the supernatural logic of my story." A viewing of the episode shows this claim to be untrue. Since the entire show leads to an ending revolving around this conceit, it would hardly have made sense to get rid of it.

Sangster was visiting the U.S. and was on the verge of returning to England when he learned from his old friend and Hammer associate that he was being sought out for the job of story consultant. Sangster's agent, Mark Lichtman, wanted him to take the job, but the writer's point of view was "Shit, man! I was a movie writer." Though Sangster found his office "grubby," as soon as he moved in, he felt like he had "made it," since he could see the famous Hollywood sign through his window. Quickly adjusting to the Hollywood lifestyle, Sangster



**Jimmy Sangster**

bought a convertible Cadillac Eldorado and zoomed off to Las Vegas to marry an American bride.

Sangster called Castle an "old time schlock horror moviemaker...the overall boss, who, as far as I could tell, did nothing except be excessively nice to us all." According to Sangster, the real boss was producer Joel Rogosin, who insisted on hiring a writer he was familiar with, Mark Weingart, to work with Sangster, who he didn't know. Rogosin was constantly complaining about Sangster's "limey writing" and wanted him to adapt to American spellings. Weingart had been a writer on the popular *Man From U.N.C.L.E.* show and it's likely it was he who brought aboard Henry Slesar and Harlan Ellison, both of whom were also *U.N.C.L.E.* authors. But by the time Ellison's story aired, Weingart was gone from the show.

One of the show's most prominent writers would be Elizabeth Walter, though she did not actually write any scripts. Sangster and Weingart selected three of her short stories for the series. It's hard to say why, considering their unremarkable quality. Maybe Sangster wanted to help out a fellow English author. One of Walter's stories, "A Fear of Spiders," had been adapted somewhat loosely on *Night Gallery*, so perhaps the rights to the others had been bought by the network at the same time but rejected for *Night Gallery*.

The show's budget was generous, which Sangster recalled "pissed off" people associated with other shows. The time slot would be Fridays from 9pm to 10pm. This was bad news, as CBS was airing the smash hit *The Odd Couple* at 9:30pm.

Billy Goldenberg composed the spooky electronic theme, while he and Robert Prince took turns doing music for individual episodes. Much of the music was dated but eerily electronic, consisting of Morton Subotnick-like blips and whirs. One particular effect, an electronic simulation of howling wind, turns up in all but a handful of episodes.

Sangster, having directed some Hammer films, was asked to direct two episodes, but was intimidated by the brief six day shooting schedules. He did agree to shoot Cabot's monologues, some of them at the Hotel Del



Coronado in San Diego. The *Ghost Story* intros quickly became much less ominous than Cabot's original *Double Play* monologue. They were downright sunny – literally. Mansfield House seems like a yacht club or merely a pleasant hotel, though with fewer background players than the pilot could afford. Cabot, usually clad in a red smoking jacket and sometimes smoking a fine cigar, soon loses the sinister bearing he showed in *Double Play*. He's downright chummy. The stories are supposed to be linked in that all the protagonists of the show supposedly stayed at Cabot's mansion at one time, but the connection is tenuous to say the least. The less well-to-do heroes and heroines, like Martin Sheen's construction worker in "Dark Vengeance," would seem like an odd fit with Cabot's cozy estate.

Castle boasted to *TV Guide* that his new show would be a roller coaster ride of thrills. This made it sound like one of his gimmick-happy films, like *The Tingler* and *13 Ghosts*. As it turned out, the show would be much more traditional and serious than Castle's campy classics. The stories were set in the modern day, but their reliance on creaky old haunting and revenge plots was positively Victorian.

Scripted by Robert Specht, an *Outer Limits* veteran, "The Dead We Live Behind" is a variation on the old *Twilight Zone* "What's on the Box." Rural cop Jason Robards berates wife Stella Stevens for watching TV all day. When she tries to leave him because he's "dull" he pushes her to the floor and accidentally kills her. Her ghost appears on the television set to mock him, and the set also starts broadcasting future events. More killing ensues, and three dead bodies come to get Robards. The episode combines two supernatural phenomena, the notion of real-life events being shown somehow on TV and the superstition that unburied bodies will return to life, yet still feels underdone.

Elizabeth Walter's story "The Concrete Captain" tells of an English journalist who travels to a North Cornish inn and investigates a concrete monument the size of a man, which represents a captain, Sam Jarvis, who was lost at sea forty years before. The journalist takes a boat out to sea where he finds a lost vessel and is soon gripped by a ghostly figure. Despite its skeletal nature, the corpse climbs right up and flips the reporter into the sea. Upon washing ashore the protagonist finds his ghost story attributed to a bump on the head. Nonetheless, a plank from the lost ship is laid to rest, with the hint that now the captain can find peace. Sangster's version moves the tale to the familiar California coast, renames the captain "Johnathan Harker" in an in-joke for those *Dracula* fans familiar with Sangster's Hammer past, consolidates the local sailors into a single innkeeper, and invents new characters in the form of a couple played by Gena Rowlands and Stuart Whitman. Rowlands abruptly develops powers of navigation and geography, leading an exasperated Whitman to lament, "What happened to the sweet girl I wedded and bedded ten years ago?" Many lovey-dovey exchanges follow, such as, "Love me, love my toothpaste." In this version the captain lost his wife to the sea, then got trapped between some rocks and begged his crew to pierce his heart with a harpoon. The couple's anniversary happens to coincide with the date of the captain's death.

The episode was directed by Richard Donner, who had previously directed television shows ranging from *The Twilight Zone* to *The Banana Splits*. The seaside scenery provided some nice atmosphere, though you probably wouldn't guess that director of photography Bill Butler would shoot *Jaws* a couple of years later. Butler helmed a handful of episodes, but most were shot by the overworked Emmett Bergholz.

"At the Cradle Foot" was written by Anthony Lawrence, a regular contributor to *The Sixth Sense*. Indeed, the basic story is similar enough to that show to make you wonder if Lawrence simply rewrote a rejected *Sixth Sense*. James Franciscus is a lawyer with ESP who's plagued by premonitions of his little girl as a twenty-year-old. The premonitions are disturbing because she is murdered in them. His obsession with the visions has already caused the breakup of his marriage. Determined to stop his daughter's murder, he heads to a small Wyoming town, presumably dropping any clients he might be representing, and rents a cheap room at a boarding house, where, in an incredible coincidence, the future mother of his daughter's killer also lives. The character is played by Meg Foster, in the first of two roles on the series. Determined to stop Foster from marrying, he gets her to fall in love with him. Foster's jealous would-be husband is eventually shot, but it doesn't solve anything because he's already made her pregnant. An enraged Foster tells Franciscus that she never loved him, and only wanted to make her fiancée jealous. Incredibly all this makes Franciscus' ex want to take him back. She's impressed by his determination to save their daughter, and she tells him all they have to do is wait out the next twenty years.

The episode ends on an uncertain note, the only ambiguous ending in the entire series. Other episodes tend to be downbeat, but this one is downbeat in its own way, as the hero's actions do nothing to solve things and in fact lead to one senseless death as well as Foster's resulting mental agony. It's depressing to think that Franciscus' little blond girl will possibly be slated for murder in a few short years. The girl, who looks like she hasn't even been old enough to talk for long, innocently asks her daddy if everyone has to die. When he replies that, yes, everyone must eventually die, she asks the wide-eyed question, "Then who will live in all the houses?"

Franciscus' visions are played out in slow motion. It's not the most original idea. *The Sixth Sense* was already doing that sort of thing on a regular basis. But, as directed by Don McDougall, the premonitions have a certain spookiness, significantly abetted by Robert Prince's music, with slowed-down calliope sounds, slow drumming, and a dissonant ominous underlying tone.

The title, by the way, refers to a motto on a courthouse: THE CLEW OF OUR DESTINY LIES AT THE CRADLE FOOT.

"Bad Connection" was no doubt inspired by the recent television movie *When Michael Calls*. Both stories concern phone calls that seem to be from a dead man. Writer John McGreevey even had the gall to name the ghostly caller Mike. Karen Black hears a weird whispery voice telling her "I love youuu..." as well as such cheery salutations as "Death is close... You're going to die." Black is convinced that it's her dead husband. It turns out that it



is, but luckily he's trying to warn her, not threaten her, and comes back to save her from a stalker.

Black shows off her talents for screaming and moaning here, as if gamely throwing away her mainstream career and auditioning to be a scream queen. And, indeed, she went on to such horrors as *The Pyx*, *Trilogy of Terror*, and *Burnt Offerings*.

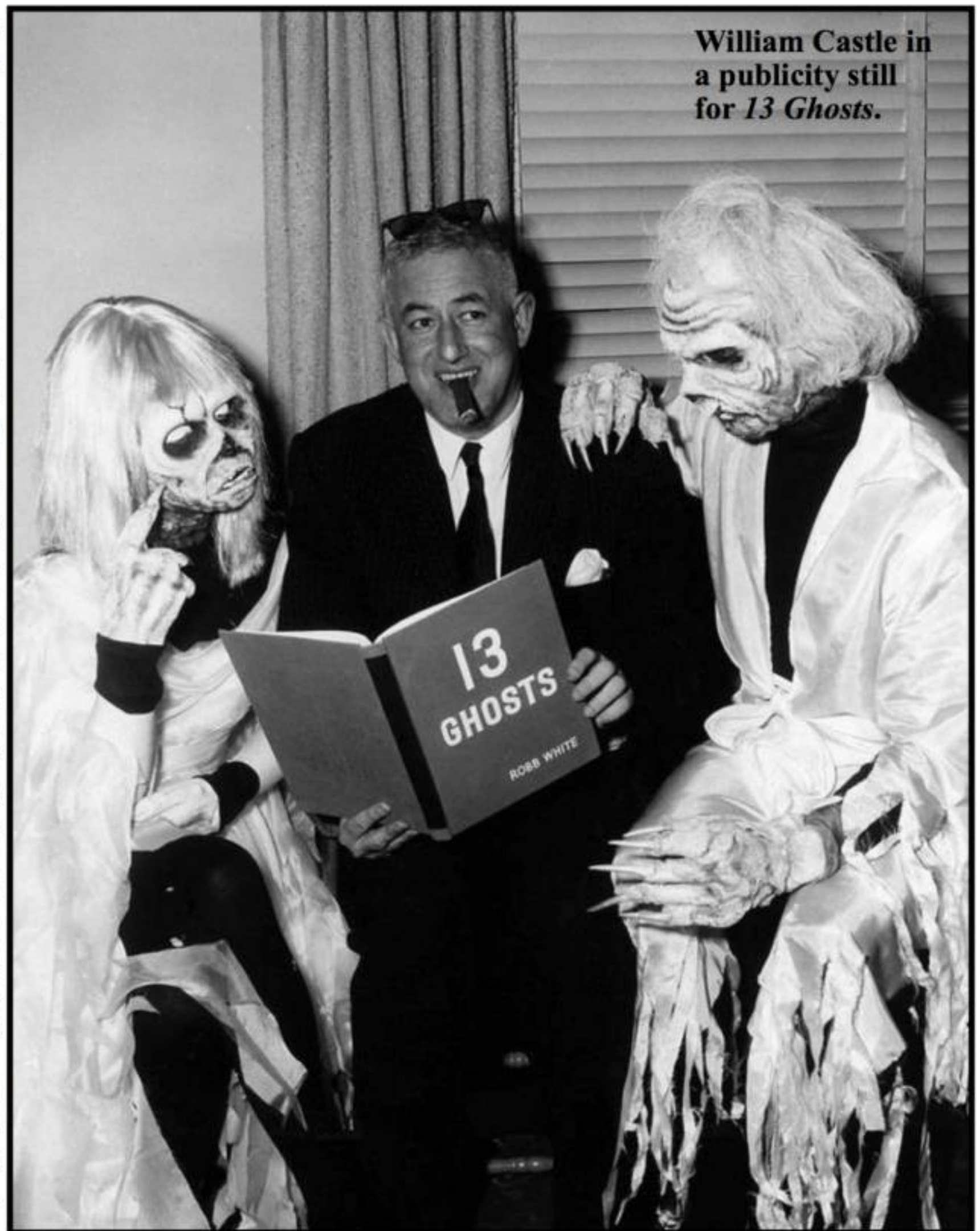
Seeleg Lester's "The Summer House" returns to the haunted house theme but finds nothing new to do with it. None other than *The Addams Family*'s Morticia, Carolyn Jones, moves into the eponymous house and hears ghostly domestic arguments. When her friend, played by William Windom, offers to stay over, she foolishly turns down his helpful offer even though the place is practically hopping with ghosts. Their voices, at least. It's never quite clear if she's hearing voices from the past or the future, but so boring is the episode that few are likely to care. Just to muddle matters further, Cabot tells us that Jones is caught in a time warp. The episode's understated punchline isn't really a punchline at all, just a newspaper reading SUMMER RESIDENT DISAPPEARS. Jones looks older than she actually was, and so watching her being tormented for an hour is depressing and pitiful rather than scary. The director was the formerly blacklisted Leo Penn, now more famous as the father of Sean Penn.

The next episode begins with Cabot noting, "Extraordinary game, chess," not the most blood-curdling opening. From there "Alter Ego" only goes downhill, with a plot, based on an unnamed Stanley Ellin story,

which had just been made into a movie, about a little boy who imagines a double of himself, only to find it becoming real and taking over his life. The boy's vivid imagination is the result of leading an isolated life, being temporarily crippled. His father isn't in any hurry to help him with his lonely predicament. Upon being asked to bring the boy his homework, the dad brushes off the request with, "I've had a lousy day, I'm beat." The father is played by Charles Aidman, whose face isn't familiar, though his voice is, from car commercials and the '80s *Twilight Zone*.

The double goes to school and takes the kid's place, immediately getting in trouble and telling kindly old teacher Helen Hayes "I'd like to kill you." The snotty, pouty brat only gets worse, killing Hayes' flowers, killing the good kid's hamster, and disemboweling the family cat. Eventually Hayes snaps and gives the boy the smacking he richly deserves, just before the stress gives her a fatal heart attack. The double agrees to go away if the original can beat him at chess. Then a comical ending occurs as Hayes materializes from beyond and drags the alter ego to a classroom in a black corner in space.

Even given credence to the fantastical nature of the story, it doesn't hold up to scrutiny. The evil brat easily fools everyone from his peers to the principal into believing he's being mistreated by his teacher. Soon



William Castle in a publicity still for *13 Ghosts*.

everyone in town turns on her and calls for her to be fired without ever thinking the boy could be lying, in spite of the fact that Hayes has been a beloved figure for decades. It also strains credibility that no one would ever contact the child's parents when his double, whom they believe to be the real McCoy, suddenly turns up at school cured and unannounced, or he when tells his principal he's being abused. Awful as this episode was, it was a personal success for screenwriter D.C. Fontana, who considered working with Helen Hayes her fondest memory of the series.

"Half a Death" is an improvement, despite an unpromisingly banal beginning in which Cabot tells us "We all like to be alone occasionally." Pamela Franklin, who's quite good in her part, is constantly haunted by the white shrouded-ghost of her twin sister. The storyline is nothing new but writer Henry Slesar keeps it moving along, and director Les Martinson, generally an unremarkable TV journeyman, manages a few spooky moments. Interestingly, it would be only a month before ABC would air an episode of the competition, *Room 222*, helmed by Martinson. It went up against the *Ghost Story* entry "Touch of Madness". Apparently Martinson's loyalty wasn't given to any particular network.

The title "House of Evil" make s us groan because



## CASTLE'S GIMMICKS

William Castle left his unique mark in the realm of celluloid horror, most notably with *House on Haunted Hill*, *13 Ghosts*, and *The Tingler*. Beyond his films, William Castle stood out as a true master showman, which allowed him to transcend the 'B-movie' genre by involving the audience in a varied assortment of ghoulish gimmicks.

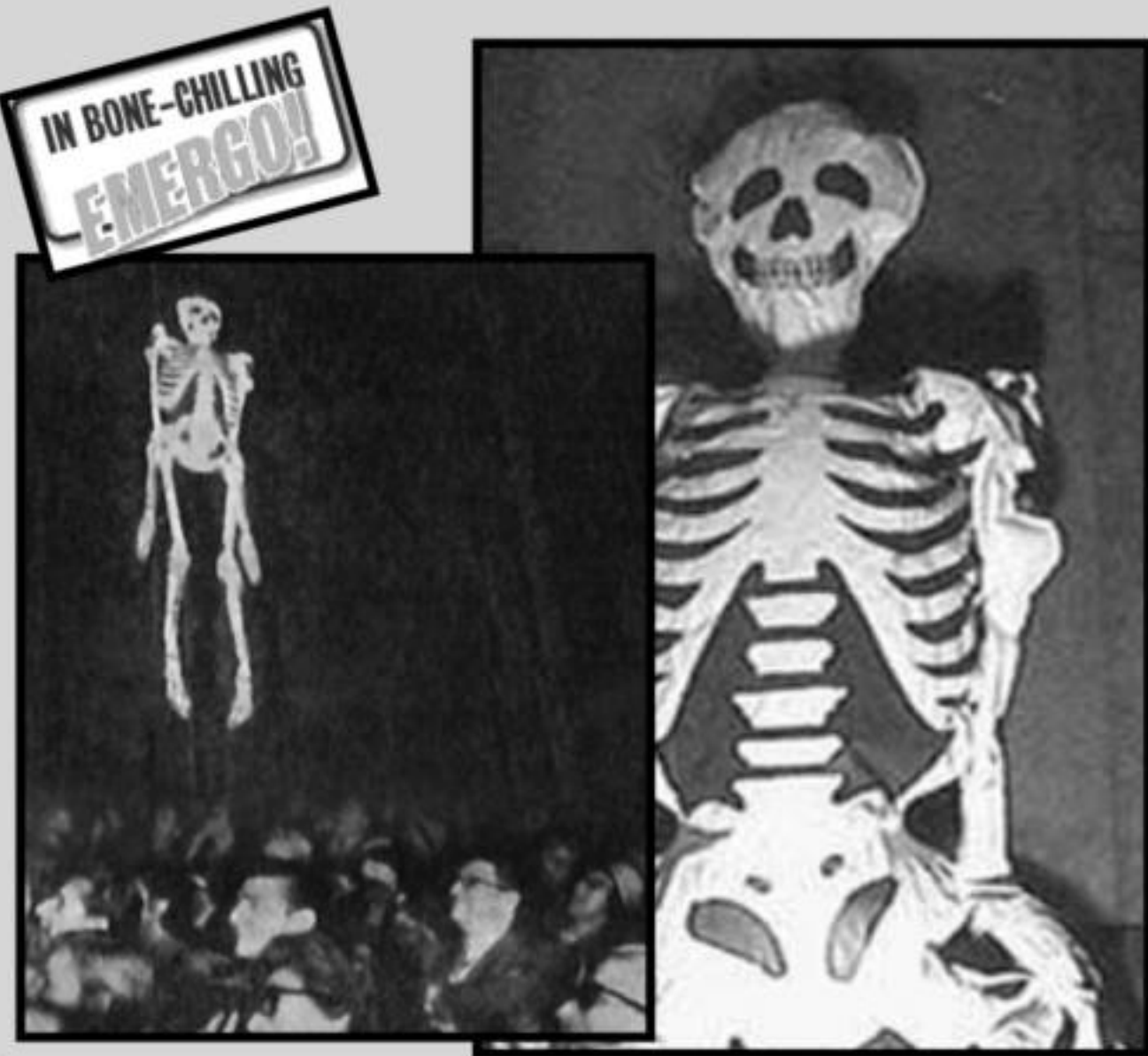
### MACABRE (1958)



For *Macabre* Castle offered theater patrons a \$1,000 life insurance policy from Lloyds of London in the event that they died from fright during the film. Nurses were placed in the lobby while a hearse was conveniently parked outside.

### HOUSE ON HAUNTED HILL (1959)

A glow-in-the-dark inflatable skeleton, through means of wire, would float over the audience during the climax of the film. Castle billed this clever gimmick as 'Emergo.'



it sounds like yet another return to the tired haunted house motif, but in fact the title is largely inappropriate. It's not a house that's evil but an old man with warlock powers. Richard Mulligan, usually known for comic parts, can't believe it when the father of his late former wife suddenly wants to visit. Mulligan assumes he must want to see his adopted grandchildren, but he's actually nursing a grudge over his daughter's death, and wants to use the kids as instruments of his revenge. Screenwriter Robert Bloch returns to the idea of voodoo dolls, which he had previously adapted for the "Sweets for the Sweet" segment in the anthology film, *The House That Dripped Blood*. Here the voodoo dolls are actually cookies. Melvyn Douglas, who plays the wife's evil father, uses his telepathy to communicate with little blond Jodie Foster, kind of like in *The Shining* but in a much more malevolent way. The frightfully gruff and cranky Douglas convinces her to do harm to the cookies, which represent individual members of the family. One wonders if he needed to go to this trouble, considering Foster's clumsiness. Immediately after doing his bidding she accidentally starts a house fire by standing too close to a curtain with a candle! Foster's wide-eyed innocence as she unknowingly assists the hateful Douglas with his evil plans is good for some chuckles, but the most surprising thing is how close ten-year-old Foster was allowed to stand to a real fire. The denouement provides another chuckle as Douglas nonchalantly turns on a pilot light and blows himself up. The director of photography, Emmett Bergholz, provides the only touch of tenseness during the conclusion by lighting Douglas' face almost in silhouette, an eerie pool of pink light on the wall behind him. Bloch's plot is reminiscent of Fredric Brown's story "The Geezenstacks" but with cookies serving as dolls.

"Cry of the Cat" is an unremarkable episode filled out with rodeo stock footage and plonky Country & western music. Lauri Peters turns into a cougar at night, which eventually gets her shot, which is convenient for Mariette Hartley, who's in love with Peters' husband, Doug McClure. Jackie Cooper dispenses exposition as an Irish rodeo clown. But for western fans the biggest thrill is seeing Donald Barry, formerly known as cowboy star Don "Red" Barry, in a cameo.

"Elegy for a Vampire" deals with a series of college murders committed by a college professor (Hal Linden) who happens to be a vampire. Security chief Arthur O'Connell wants to establish a volunteer security squad, since he believes the police aren't doing all they can. And he appears to be right, since the cops apparently can't afford a single officer to patrol the area. Seemingly the only three volunteers are the security chief himself, Linden, and his buddy/fellow professor Mike Farrell. In spite of the murders, young girls insist on walking past the foreboding campus graveyard/murder site at night. And, in spite of the fact that the attacks always take place in the same spot, the patrollers are always off somewhere else and don't show up until they are a minute too late. Of course, Linden has a reason, since he's the fiend behind the killings. Witnesses claim the killer looks just like Pendergast, a recently deceased professor. The police lieutenant (John Milford) in charge of the case believes the killer is diverting suspicion by throwing the blame on a dead man. He's right, of course,



except he thinks the killer is O'Connell when it's really Linden. The audience can clearly see it's Linden committing the murders, so why does everyone in the cast think it's Pendergast?

"Elegy for a Vampire" was another Elizabeth Walter story. Her original title was "Pendergast," and the killings took place in Fortune Green, a suburb of north-west London. Walter saves the revelation that the narrator is actually the vampire for the last three paragraphs, when he crows about having fooled the reader. Nonetheless, more alert readers will have probably already considered this possibility, which is presumably why adapter Mark Weingart tips us off immediately. Weingart also adds a postscript on a train, whereas Walter leads to a more subdued ending with the killer moving to another town, as he's done before in moving from Yorkshire to London. The police are more cooperative in the original story, and welcome the idea of vigilante patrols, as well as staking the corpse they believe to be a vampire. The story's victims are girls as young as seven, which was too unsavory for network TV. One girl even takes a late-night trip to the cemetery in hopes of luring the killer! Unfortunately for her, it works. But the biggest difference is that the story's killer is merely using the vampire myth as a cover for his misdeeds, whereas the show's protagonist is the real thing. The story has an odd undercurrent in that it suggests professors may have things in common with vampires. The narrator is described as a strange, "furtive" man, and a lifelong bachelor, though pushing fifty. The local detective says academics are "queer" people, and describes them as being children at heart, which is sometimes said to be a trait of child molesters (the killer is described as "someone who molests little girls"). NBC made sure to stress that Linden and the youngish Farrell are strictly heterosexual and spoken for.

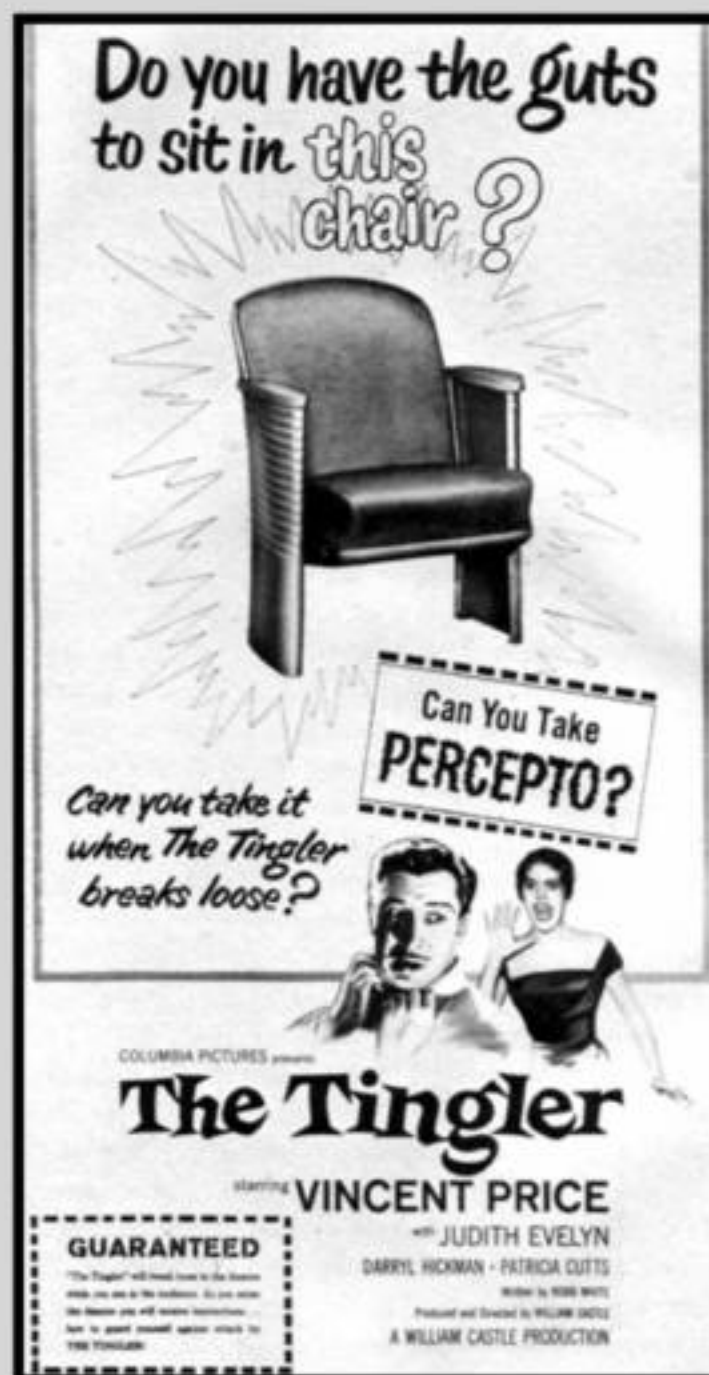
"Elegy for a Vampire" may have inspired Stephen King's story "Strawberry Spring," about a college teacher who fears he may be possessed by the undying murderer that's been slaying girls on campus.

"Touch of Madness" was written by Halsted Welles, whose sundry TV credits included *Suspense*, *Alfred Hitchcock Presents*, and *Night Gallery*. Geraldine Page inherits a large but dilapidated/condemned house and allows her older relatives, played by Rip Torn and Lyn Loring, to stay. At night she hears ghostly pool games and weird laughter, but her aunt and uncle tell her she's only sleepwalking and hallucinating. When she persists in her belief that the house is haunted, they warn her that she'll end up in an asylum like her mother. In actuality, they've conspired murder long ago and are concerned about her digging up family skeletons, which she does – literally.

The conclusion is by far the most understated one in the series, as the dotty relatives are more preoccupied with birdwatching than the fact they're about to be arrested. To the episode's credit, one cliché is mercifully avoided: the crazy relatives *do not* turn out to be ghosts themselves in the end. The murder and ghost stuff is familiar, so they attempt to drum up shock value with sudden cuts of supposedly frightening cats and rats. Most entertaining are the amusing performances of Torn and Loring as the dotty old couple, though their song "Old Memories" becomes tiresome by the second reprise.

## CASTLE'S GIMMICKS

### THE TINGLER (1959)



One of Castle's most famous gimmicks was that of "Percepto." Certain seats in select theaters were equipped with vibrating motors to give the audience a startle when the title creature is let loose inside a cinema during the film. For years many thought that Castle used a device that emitted an electric jolt, when, in fact, he used military surplus airplane wing de-icers – which gave off more of a startling vibration instead of a shock.

### 13 GHOSTS (1960)

"Illusion-O" was Castle's invention for *13 Ghosts*. Moviegoers were each given a handheld "ghost-viewer" made of cardboard and two strips of red and blue cellophane. The brave members of the audience could look through the red filter to see the ghostly apparitions while those who were faint-of-heart could opt for the blue filter to "remove" them.

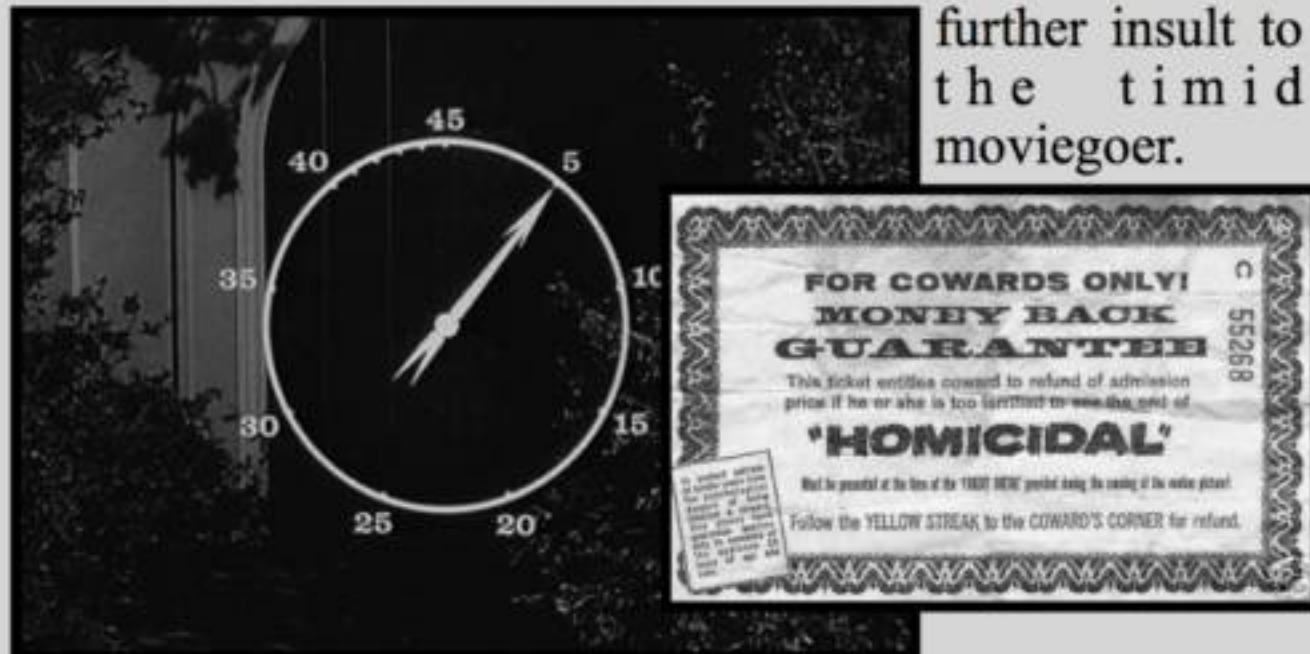




## CASTLE'S GIMMICKS

### HOMICIDAL (1961)

Castle inserted a 45-second "Fright Break" at the climax of *Homicidal* where any audience member could leave the theater and receive a full-refund if they were too frightened. Of course, they would have to endure the humiliation of having to go into the "Coward's Corner" in the lobby where lights flashed and a recording added



further insult to the timid moviegoer.

### MR. SARDONICUS (1961)

Each audience member was given a card with a glow-in-the-dark thumb that allowed them to "vote" if the title character would be granted mercy or be punished. Near the film's end William Castle appeared on screen and conducted a "punishment poll." Allegedly, there were two endings filmed (however, this was just been a claim

by Castle) and whichever one the audience decided on would be shown. In reality, no one offered Mr. Sardonicus mercy, thus the supposed 'alternate ending' was never seen.



The title "Creatures of the Canyon" may raise hopes for some sort of monsters, but sad to say the only creatures on display are a pair of ordinary house dogs. Cabot notes that while dogs are known as man's best friend, "no one's ever said they were woman's best friend." Angie Dickinson is driven to hallucinations when she's persecuted by a doberman, owned by neighbor John Ireland, that blames her for her husband's death. The doberman dies, but then Dickinson's own pet, which looks to be a cross between a schnauzer and a poodle, is possessed by the doberman's spirit, leading to the silliest ending in the entire series, as the little mutt bares its fangs, leaps on Dickinson and kills her, then runs off with her slipper. "Creatures" was written by Del Reisman, who had been a producer on *The Twilight Zone* and later served as president of the Writer's Guild of America. But he certainly didn't do any great honors to his profession here.

"Time of Terror" was the last episode to bear the *Ghost Story* title. The script gained its inspiration from Elizabeth Walter's "Traveling Companion," though the only things kept were the surprise ending and the incident of a car crash. Walter's story turns on an ending, familiar from the *Twilight Zone* episode "The Hitchhiker," itself, based on a radio play, in which the main character finally realizes she is dead. Walter's heroine meets a young man while traveling home on a train. Eventually they go to a cemetery, where they realize the truth about themselves.

Sangster's version moves the story to a hotel filled with old people. Since most viewers will realize that Neal, the central character, is dead long before she does, Sangster wisely downplays the would-be surprise by shifting attention to Neal's search for her husband, who was in a car wreck with her. She insists on returning to the scene of the accident, and the otherworldly hotel manager complies. Neal, who's been desperately searching for her husband, realizes she is alone because her husband did *not* die. The story becomes one about the acceptance of death. Sangster's other major contribution is to portray death as one big lotto game, and the afterlife as a kind of banal bureaucracy, where occasional clerical errors may affect the afterlife, an idea expounded upon later in Harlan Ellison's short story "Hitler Painted Roses" and Stanley Elkin's novel *The Living End*. Sangster, in his post-Hammer days, seems to have become concerned with jazzing up old horror tropes by modernizing them. He later wrote a horror film called *The Legacy*, which was meant to be set in a Detroit hospital, and was disappointed when other writers came in and changed the setting to a more quaint English country house.

Reviews weren't very positive. It didn't help that the two episodes reviewed in *The New York Times*, "The Concrete Captain" and "Alter Ego," were not among the best, with the latter being possibly the worst of all. *Time* called it the silliest show on TV, and based on episodes like "Dark Vengeance" and "Creatures of the Canyon," they would probably have been right.

NBC hoped to combat the low ratings by overhauling the show. Most drastic was the loss of the title *Ghost Story*, to be replaced with the moniker *Circle of Fear*. The new credits featured a swirling hypnowheel which briefly morphed into a cheap animation of a fanged vampire. The new music, its beginning bars reminiscent of



the *Batman* theme, was driving and urgent rather than the slow spookiness of the previous credits.



Cabot was dropped as well, so the show could get right to the plot. Unnecessary as they might have been, the avuncular host's musings provided some of the lighter moments of the show. Cabot opens "The Dead We Leave Behind" by declaring, "Television. Perhaps the single most significant invention of the past few decades," then muses vaguely about what it would be like if something "absolutely astonishing" appeared on television. "The Concrete Captain" inspires the host to speak of the ocean, "Oh, what stories she could tell if she could speak." In "Bad Connection" he notes we take the telephone for granted. "Books are indeed the cornerstone of learning," he declares in "Elegy for a Vampire." The outset of "Cry of the Cat" finds him complimenting his tabby, which he redundantly describes as "feline," then making the obvious point that you wouldn't dream of letting a wild panther or tiger into your home.

Otherwise the show was not noticeably changed. Just as many restless specters floated about. The show, initially scheduled for thirteen episodes, increased to twenty-two as the network waited to see if the changes would improve its fortunes.

On January 5, 1973, the rechristened show debuted with "Death's Head." Janet Leigh is frightened of bugs and wants her husband (Gene Nelson) to get rid of them. He's a lawyer, but he's so overcome by his hobby of entomology it's all he does anymore. He refuses to kill bugs when she asks him to. He insists his work is different, for, though he kills bugs he also preserves them, immortalizing them forever. Leigh takes solace in an affair with her husband's friend and business partner, Rory Calhoun. During a trip to a mysterious witch store, a Shelly Duvall-esque young woman bluntly suggests Leigh kill her husband with poison made from ground-up insects. Though she acts shocked and affronted, Leigh proceeds to do just that.

Upon poisoning her husband, Leigh is tormented by swarms of bugs and a death's head moth in particular. As with "The Summer House" it's a little depressing to watch a woman of advanced age being tormented to death, but in this case she really does deserve it. The effects are remarkably cheap, even for this show. One huge sinister butterfly is actually just a kite. Other flying insects are represented by constructing a mobile and filming its shadow on the wall. As if to compensate for this, the latter

part of the show becomes an exercise in dark lighting and sound effects, and a pretty good one at that. It's probably the best episode up to this point, though "Half a Death" and "Touch of Madness" have their moments as well.

The second *Circle of Fear*, "Dark Vengeance," was written by Peter L. Dixon, whose occasional television credits include *Flipper*, *The Waltons*, *The Paper Chase*, and *Knight Rider*. Red-hatted construction worker Martin Sheen digs up a box containing a small rocking horse, which causes wife Kim Darby to have bad dreams of rolling millstones, swirling glass eyeballs and the horse neighing ominously. Darby eventually remembers that the horse, in a rather wild coincidence, belonged to her family when she was a kid and it systematically killed them all off but for her (the box also comes conveniently packaged with newspapers that tell the story of the curse that afflicted her family). In another coincidence, Darby realizes the anniversary of the deaths is coming right up. The dark vengeance of the title is the result of the fact that the horse is still upset over the loss of its mate when Darby fought with a cousin over it and broke it. Sheen comes up with the idea of using a mirror to trick the horse into thinking it's seeing another of its kind and luring it back into the chest. Sheen is way too intense for his role, which only calls attention to Darby's limitations. The image of a living rocking horse is strikingly surreal enough at first, but becomes ridiculous when we see how obvious it is that the horse is being pulled along with an unseen rope by an offscreen crew member.

Harlan Ellison called "Earth, Air, Fire, and Water" a bastardization of his story "Shattered Like a Glass Goblin," which is accurate. The name of the original story isn't even given. The television version is credited to D.C. Fontana from a story by Fontana and Ellison. Ellison's most famous television screenplay was "City on the Edge of Forever," a *Star Trek* episode. Ellison became famously disgruntled when series creator Gene Roddenberry ordered changes to the script. The final changes were made by the very same D.C. Fontana, so it's surprising Ellison would allow her to adapt a story of his. But Fontana, a good friend of Ellison's, kept the fact of her participation in the "City" rewrite a secret from Ellison, and would do so for years.

"Shattered Like a Glass Goblin" concerns a Vietnam vet, Rudy, who goes to Los Angeles to look up his old girlfriend Kris, who's living at a commune called The Hill and participating in casual sex and drugs. Under the influence of LSD and marijuana, the communards slowly succumb to the horrific beings that live in the flooded basement and may or may not be imaginary. Rudy, the story's most sober individual, is immersed in the same psychedelic horror as the tale ends. The uncomfortable details, such as the buzzing and scratching felt by the drug-users, are unusually convincing coming from an author who never used drugs himself. The beasts that appear are nowhere as disturbing as the idea, similar to Philip K. Dick's *The Three Stigmata of Palmer Eldritch*, that a drug trip might permanently alter the tripper and might, in fact, never end, a thought that has often occurred to those experiencing the proverbial "bad trip."

All the character names are changed. The hero, played by Sam Converse, an actor in the square-jawed



James Franciscus mold, is now called Sam. More importantly, there is no reference to drugs, which of course changes the whole point of the story. It's not that drugs were completely forbidden on '70s television. In fact there were plenty of tele-movies purporting to show the dangerous effects of drugs. More likely the story was changed to fit the supernatural format of the series. Plenty of other TV shows and films of the period are marked with dated references to women's lib and black radicalism, but *Ghost Story/Circle of Fear* was not one of these. The show seemed to studiously refuse any acknowledgment of such current events as urban turmoil or the Vietnam War, sticking to the basic horror elements. This in spite of the fact that Castle was, strangely enough, the first filmmaker to show an acid trip onscreen, in *The Tingler*, which makes one think the bread and butter formula of *Ghost Story* was motivated more by the network's desire to play it safe and keep things simple than by Castle's storytelling instincts.

In Fontana's version, the weirdness is caused not by drugs but witchcraft. The hippies become bohemian artists, and the house they inhabit is now possessed by the spirits of witches. Yes, it's the haunted house cliché, complete with an opening scene in which the main character is warned about rumors of a haunting by a minor character. In spite of Fontana's attempts to hack the story up, it's still the most strikingly weird *Ghost Story*. Even watered down, Ellison is more weird and original than the trite plots of Sangster, Walter, and Lester. "Earth, Air, Fire, and Water" represents, along with "Death's Head," the best of the series.

The new title refers to the elements, which any Wiccans watching would recognize as being essential to witchcraft rites. Though the story has been stripped of drug references, it is still possible to read it as a warning about the counterculture. The bohemian artists stare dazedly in a drug-like state, uncaring of the evil that threatens them all. The only one to resist the growing evil is the earnest hero, who perhaps not coincidentally is the newest member of the group and the only one not dressed in hippie-ish clothes.

Sam's melted metallic face, seen in the downbeat ending, comes from Jonah, another character in the original story, who goes insane when he hallucinates his face is melting.

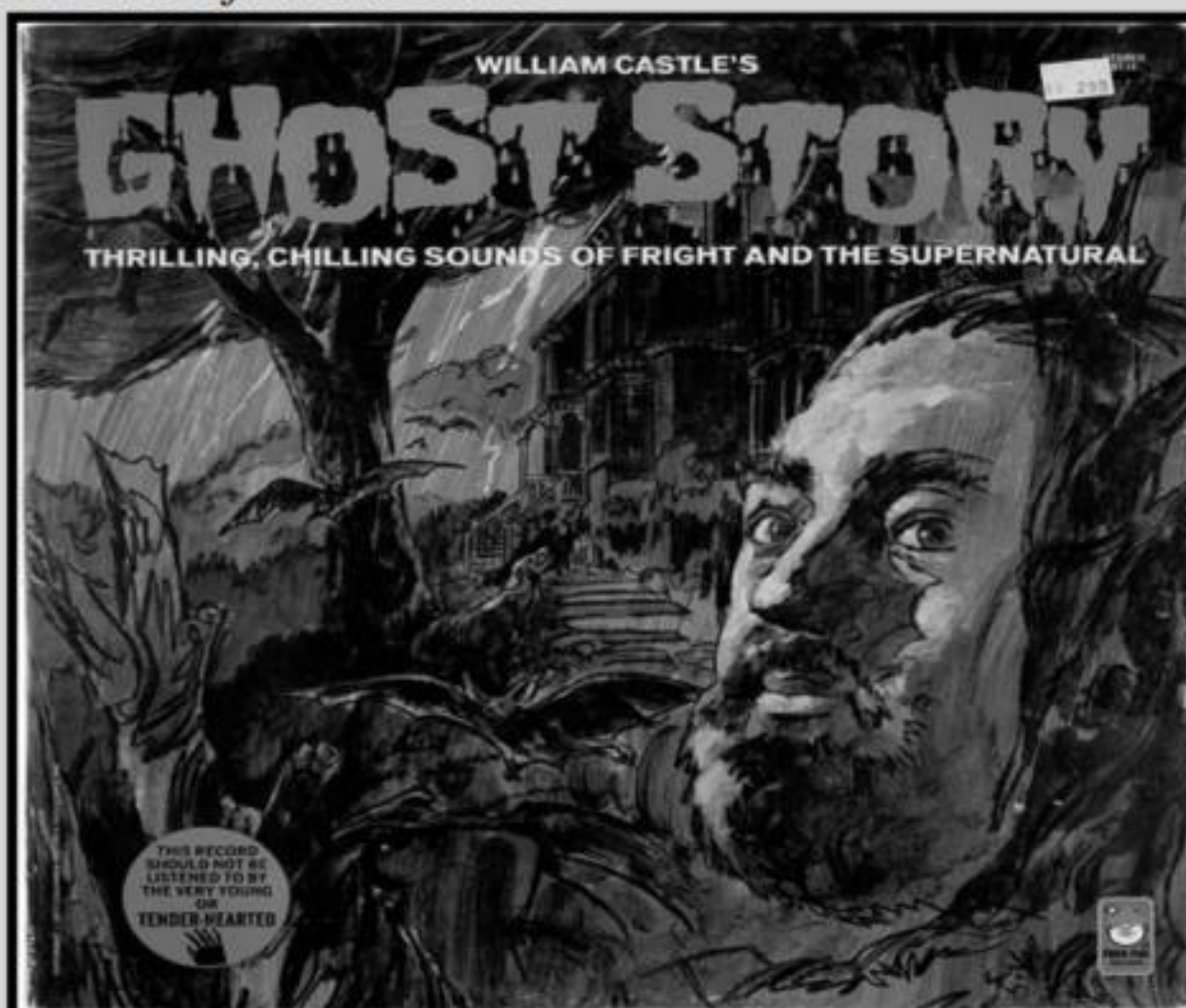
Dissatisfied as Ellison might have been, the show made an impression on somebody, probably TV director John Newland. Having hosted the early anthology shows *Lights Out* and *One Step Beyond* well in advance of *The Twilight Zone*, much less *Night Gallery* or *Ghost Story*, Newland was still active in TV, directing episodes of *Night Gallery* and *The Sixth Sense*. A few months after *Circle of Fear* was canceled, Newland's TV film *Don't Be Afraid of the Dark* appeared. It dealt with gnome-like creatures, spirits of previous inhabitants of an old house, whispering to each other as they eagerly awaited the chance to claim a new tenant, in a fashion somewhat reminiscent of Ellison and Fontana's episode. Whereas the artists in "Earth" unleash the evil by finding the jars, in *Don't Be Afraid of the Dark* Kim Darby, a *Circle of Fear* veteran, does the same by opening an old sealed-up fireplace.

"Doorway to Death," directed by Darryl Duke, was Sangster's best entry on the show. Barry Nelson moves

with his three kids to an old apartment building, where his oldest daughter (Susan Dey) says, "I still can't get over what a bargain this place is," a line that, in a horror show, always signals that a place is haunted. Her younger siblings (Leif Garrett and Dawn Lyn) start hanging out with a mustachioed, axe carrying man who lives in the haunted attic which sometimes transforms into a wintry landscape where the axeman killed his wife and toted her off in a burlap bag, one of the more interestingly surreal bits of phenomena on the series. The ghostly axe-killer is never shown explicitly threatening the kids, TV censorship being what it was at the time, yet the unsavory implication is still there, prefiguring *The Amityville Horror* and *The Shining*. Eventually the youngsters get a little suspicious of their peculiar friend, and the scenes in which they innocently discuss what he may be up to provide a few chuckles, such as when they debate why he carried his wife's body to this building. Bright little Garrett, who's a much more natural child actor than the girl playing his younger sis, theorizes, "he wanted to be with her forever." To which she asks, "Is that why he bricked her up in the closet?" Watching these two attempt drama as the axeman bricks up their sister provides more humor. At least one moment of humor is intentional, probably inserted to defuse any squeamishness viewers might have at seeing children in the midst of a show about axe killing. The sister declares of their murderous acquaintance, "I don't like him any more." "Me neither," says Garrett. The family does what all families who live in haunted houses should do, and moves away. The ghost, who looks like Edgar Allen Poe, watches them leave, shambles and broods a little bit, then heads back to his winter world.

#### WILLIAM CASTLE'S GHOST STORY LP

In 1972 Peter Pan Records released an LP tie-in with Castle's supernatural show. The record features a narrator (not Sebastian Cabot) and some creepy sound effects. Side A consists of five tracks: *The Deadly Dog*, *The Deadly Orchid*, *The Dead Do Return*, *The Deadly Waiter*, and *Lobotomy and the Shock Treatment*. Side B features *The Beast in the Night*, *The Cathedral of Evil*, and *Terror from the Tomb*.





With "Legion of Demons" Castle belatedly got around to capitalize the *Rosemary's Baby* craze he himself helped usher in. The episode suggests the producer was keeping up with the competition. The Satanists in the episode are accompanied, if only in dream sequences, by a sinister doberman, which suggests familiarity with *The Mephisto Waltz*, one of the more expensive *Rosemary's Baby* imitations. *The Mephisto Waltz* starred Barbara Parkins, who also starred in the "New House" pilot.

Shirley Knight Hopkins allows her friend to talk her into leaving their "jerkwater town" for the big city, where they become roommates and go to work at the same office, whereupon the friend disappears. We know the office workers are up to something immediately because of the way they act overly friendly and weird.

In order to stay modern and provide a touch of authenticity, the witches are given some hedonistic dialogue in the vein of the rhetorical spiels of San Francisco's Church of Satan. One corny guy with a mustache intensely insists, "Evil is relative. People must be evolved to see its beauty." They also perform a chant which sounds like a Dada poem: "Bones, claws, hooves, horns, scorpions, feathers, hair, bone marrow, coxcomb, conehead, spiderweb, blood." The Satanists are hysterically overwrought, the entire show somewhat ridiculous, yet it moves along at a fast pace and is therefore more entertaining than most other episodes.

"Graveyard Shift" stars John Astin as a limping night watchman at Fillmore Studios, where he was once an actor in such films as *Satan's Revenge*. Already busy enough trying to keep the place safe from a gang known as the Royal Warlocks, all white guys in their twenties, Astin soon encounters the spirits of creatures that appeared in Fillmore films.

A grinning William Castle shows up to play the studio head, who brags he knew how to scare the public: "I gave them the most terrifying characters ever created. The Claw, Wolfman, Scarface, the Mummy, and Dr. Death." Dr. Death was unpopular, however, because he was simply "too diabolical, too evil." He also had the power to possess bodies, "even unborn children," leading Astin to fear Dr. Death is after his pregnant wife, played by the real Mrs. Astin, Patty Duke Astin, and their own unborn. In a climax sure to make film preservationists weep, Astin banishes the spirits by tossing reels of their old films off a balcony and setting them afire. A happy ending finds Astin visiting his

wife in the hospital, where their baby has already been born. The question of how Astin will find work and avoid jail after running around the movie lot and burning film is conveniently skirted over.

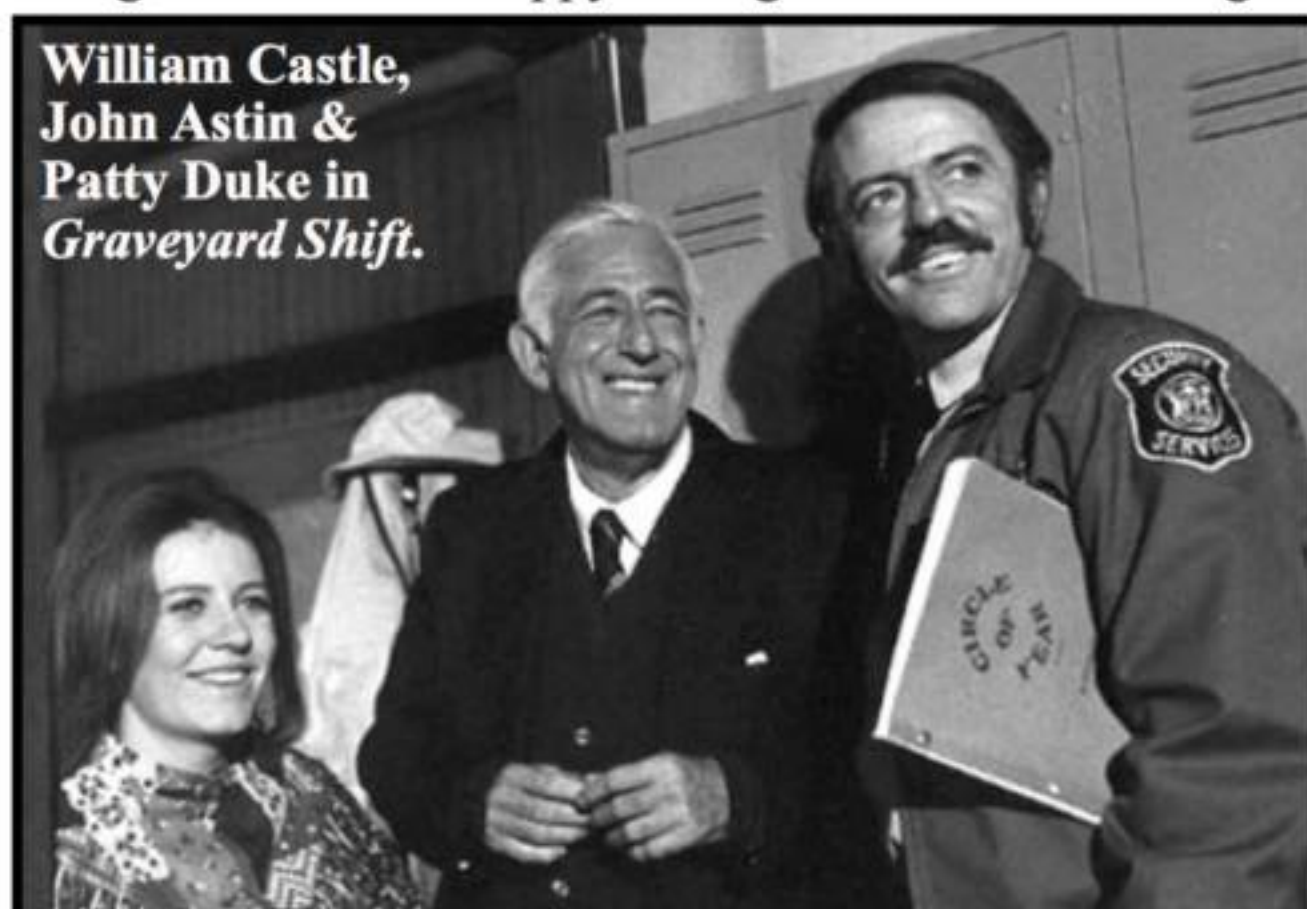
It's obvious from his cameo that William Castle was no great actor, yet the episode was the beginning of a surprising sideline in the producer-director's career in which he appeared in a few movies, basically playing characters much like himself. The next time he did this, it was on television, in a movie called *The Sex Symbol*, yet he went on to appear in two big budget Hollywood movies, *Shampoo* and *Day of the Locust*. Perhaps playing this part was the network's compensation for not actually directing any episodes.

"Spare Parts," scripted by Lester and Sangster from a story by Lester and Paul Mason, is the latest variation on the old *Hands of Orlac* plot in which strange things begin to happen to the recipient of a body part transplant. Mason and Lester's twist, borrowed from a Pierre Boileau and Thomas Narcejac novel that was published in the U.S. under the title *Choice Cuts*, is that a dead man provides body parts to more than one person. Turns out the dead guy is still mad at his wife for killing him and his ghost compels the recipients to go after her. Whatever novelty the transplant angle might have is negated by the familiarity of the revenge from the grave plot and the finale in which the ghost vanishes after the killer is compelled to confess. Meg Foster's eerie eyes are put to scary use, but that's the only decent touch.

Written by Bill S. Ballinger, a veteran of both *Alfred Hitchcock Presents* and *The Outer Limits*, wrote "The Ghost of Potter's Field," the next-to-last episode, is another ring on the old doppelganger theme, a quite unremarkable one but much more tolerable than "Alter Ego." In any case the episode didn't hurt Ballinger's genre-screenwriting career: he soon went on to do two *Night Stalkers*.

Journalist Tab Hunter, desperate for a story, decides to go to a cemetery and see if anything's happening there. And indeed it is, for he finds himself being watched – by himself! Or rather, by his evil double. Lady friend Louise Sorel reads to Tab about doppelgangers, but he scoffs, in spite of the fact he's been seeing his doppelganger all along. It turns out the mysterious twin, which has been ruining Hunter's life, is actually a ghost that doesn't remember who it is and wants to take over Hunter's body by gradually wearing him down and spiritually destroying him. When Sorel asks Hunter if he knows who the ghost is, he scoffs, "Ah, who cares?" The spirit turns out to be a lowlife mobster who suffered amnesia because of a blow to the head, which is why he can't recall his identity. He latched onto Tab because that was the first depressed and vulnerable person he saw upon returning from the grave. Sorel and Hunter go to the potter's field, conjure the ghost, remind him who he is, and ask him to go haunt his killer, which he does.

Hunter would later lament this TV-intensive phase of his career, saying that on television he was stuck with "a bunch of traffic-cop directors." He said his work on *Circle* and other TV shows was "all a sorry substitute and didn't really feel much like acting." Apparently he missed the enormous acting challenges provided by such films as *Ride*



William Castle,  
John Astin &  
Patty Duke in  
*Graveyard Shift*.



*the Wild Surf* and *Operation Bikini*.

The show's final broadcast was "The Phantom of Herald Square," a challenger to "Alter Ego" for the prize of worst episode. Young women walk at night in scenes reminiscent of *The Night Stalker* and "Elegy for a Vampire" and are killed by an old man with bushy white eyebrows. *Starsky and Hutch* TV star, David Soul, becomes involved with a young artist (Shelia Larken) who's being stalked by the old man. It's immediately obvious that Soul is the old man. The same folky song, with such lyrics as "Dee dee dee dee," "Wee wee wee wee," and "Do do do doo do do do do dee uh uh ah ohh," is played about five times, first over a montage with ducks in a park, Soul in a turtleneck, and Larken eating hot dogs.

Particularly ridiculous is the introduction of sinister businessman Victor Jory, whose villainy is announced as soon as he appears, watching passersby through a telescope and scoffing, "Like ants. All of them. Scurrying around, sure in the belief that they're masters of their own destinies." Then he offhandedly turns to Soul, and asks, "Now, where were we?"

The only interesting aspect of the show is Sangster's modernization of the old Faust legend. Soul's sold his soul in order to gain immortality but the price is that he must turn into an old man at night and kill young women to regain his vitality. Although it's never clearly said that Jory is the devil, the implication is obvious. In the modern world the devil is a man in an office building ordering around suits over the telephone.

Oddly, Soul's character is named Barlow, which is coincidentally the name of his adversary in the later TV movie *Salem's Lot*.

After this story, which aired March 30th, 1973, NBC pulled the plug on *Circle of Fear*. Considering the quality of the last three episodes, few viewers were upset. The time slot was thereafter shared by the Sally Field vehicle *The Girl with Something Extra* and *Sanford and Son*.

Perhaps the show's biggest flaw was its one-hour length. Most of the shows were simple, and even more plot-heavy entries like "At the Cradle Foot" fell victim to padding, with the premonition repeated over and over, though not always in quite the same way. "The Summer House" and "Touch of Madness" show endless scenes of their heroines wandering through empty rooms, and "Touch" half-heartedly tries to shock us with a rat sitting on a pool table. "Doorway to Death" repeats the same shot of the moon behind some clouds several times. The dullness of watching old people wait for their numbers to be called is unbearably dull even by these standards. But all episodes shared this flaw. "Earth, Air, Fire and Water" was probably the least padded, since it featured terrible things happening to several different people rather than one main character.

Lester and Joseph Stefano had written for the show *The Outer Limits*, and though the show came out well overall, they still felt hampered by network formula. Lester had pretty much the same opinion of the Castle show, saying, "*Ghost Story* had a good concept. But once again, the network wanted horror," by which he probably meant cheap thrills and the need to include a cliffhanger shock before each commercial break.

In genre magazines like *Twilight Zone* and *Fangoria*, Richard Matheson talked at some length about his numerous TV assignments, but not about *Ghost Story*. In her 1973 collection *Come and Get Me and Other Uncanny Invitations*, Elizabeth Walter made sure to include her three stories that were adapted on *Ghost Story*, even though she had already printed two of them in previous collections.

Unlike Lester, Bloch, and Ellison, Sangster had no regrets about the show, and gladly accepted the American money. "By the time we were finished, I had a house, car, mortgages...I quite liked America!" Sangster happily accepted more TV work on shows such as *McCloud*, *Fantasy Island*, *The Six Million Dollar Man*, and *Wonder Woman*. Joel Rogosin was sufficiently impressed by Sangster to hire him for *Ironside* and a less popular show called *Most Wanted*. Not only that, but Sangster's work as uncredited director of Cabot's opening chats led to similar duties directing Jack Palance's segments years later on *Ripley's Believe It or Not*. In a very real way Sangster owed much of his TV career, which is less well-known than his Hammer Studios work but undoubtedly more lucrative, to Rogosin. Another of Sangster's TV scripts was yet another imitation of Castle's *Rosemary's Baby*, with a heap of *The Exorcist* thrown in, called *Good Against Evil*, from the director of *The Mephisto Waltz*.

*Double Play*'s other half, *Movin' On*, finally returned in the form of a series in 1974. NBC must have been satisfied with Sangster's work on *Ghost Story*, because they put him in charge of this show as well. Slightly more popular than *Ghost Story*, it lasted two seasons.



On the set of *The Tingler* Vincent Price shares a spine 'tingling' story with some random specters while William Castle looks on.

**SCREAM!**  
**SCREAM FOR**  
**YOUR LIVES!**



**THE**  
**TINGLER**  
is loose in  
**THIS MAGAZINE!**



Castle's assistant, Rick Blum later became head of the film department at the University of Central Florida, and, under the name Richard A. Blum, wrote a popular screenwriting guide, *Television and Screenwriting: From Concept to Contract*, currently in its fourth edition.

You would expect having a network series to be a high point for a low budget auteur like William Castle, yet his autobiography, *Step Right Up! I'm Gonna Scare the Pants off America* makes no mention of the show, jumping nearly a half decade from *Rosemary's Baby* and the Manson murders to his obscure final directorial effort, *Shanks*.

Still, *Ghost Story/Circle of Fear* wasn't forgotten by everyone. Certain images lingered in the minds of viewers: Janet Leigh's face on a death's head moth, a young woman trapped in a jar in "Legion of Demons," the melted metal face at the conclusion of "Earth, Air, Fire, and Water." Eventually the show turned up in reruns. In the mid-eighties NBC affiliates started showing it at irregular hours of the wee morning. Bootlegs of the show, popular with TV collectors, tend to come from this period and are interspersed with snippets of eighties commercials in which Santa delivers Norelco batteries and Lena Horne sings of the joys of coffee.

Whatever its flaws, *Ghost Story* had a handful of notable episodes, and might have had some more had it continued. Perhaps it will eventually come to legitimate DVD to haunt new viewers.

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# HORROR'S HALLOWED HOME LEGACY OF EVIL:



By August Holden

# THE AMITYVILLE HORROR

## HORRORS IN AMITYVILLE

Who would have ever guessed that a small Long Island home would be capable of launching a franchise? It may have been thirty-four years ago when *The Amityville Horror* became a world-renowned best-selling novel, but the legend of the house on 112 Ocean Avenue lives on. Three decades later, details surrounding the Amityville case are still as hotly contested as ever – and apparently, still as profitable! Three, that's not a typo, *three* new Amityville films are on the way...

First up is *The Amityville Horror: The Lost Tapes* which looks at the haunting through the eyes (and video-camera) of a news reporter. Rumor has it that *The Lost Tapes* will be done in the same 'found footage' style as *Paranormal Activity* and *Apollo 18*. A January 27th, 2012 release is scheduled.

Also set for 2012 is *The Amityville Legacy 3D*, produced by Hannibal Classics. Legacy follows a family that moves into the infamous Dutch Colonial home. It doesn't take long before strange occurrences are afoot and the family needs to seek out the aid of a priest – the same priest who combated the evil in the house years ago. The only problem is that said priest is now in an insane asylum!

Last, but not least, a documentary titled *My Amityville Horror* hopes to provide a new perspective on the original haunting by speaking with Daniel Lutz, the eldest son of George and Kathleen Lutz – former owners of the iconic horror house. While no release date has yet been announced, producer Andrea Adams has stated that the film is currently in its post-production phase. Eric Walter, the director of *My Amityville Horror*, has recently said that, as of now, they do not have any distribution plans, but intend to submit their film to 'top tier' film festivals both domestically and internationally.

So, with 2012 apparently becoming the year of *The Amityville Horror*, it might be due time to brush up on the previous Amityville films...and there are quite a few of them. Nine to be exact. Of course, as with any notable franchise, there are always some less-than-exceptional entries. Which ones are worthy of haunting your DVD player and which are true cinematic horrors, you ask? Fear not, we'll lead you to the light. Our rating system:



= Must See



= Not Bad



= Passable



= Poison, Avoid At All Costs

## THE AMITYVILLE HORROR (1979)

American International Pictures; 1979, Running Time: 117 Min.,  
Dir: Stuart Rosenberg, Writer: Sandor Stern; Cast: James Brolin,  
Margot Kidder, Rod Steiger.

Based on Jay Anson's novel of the same name, which, in turn, was based on a supposed true story. *The Amityville Horror* is a gripping affair that, arguably, is one of the finer flicks in the series.

James Brolin and Margot Kidder shine as George and Kathy Lutz, the unfortunate buyers of the evil house.

At its heart, *The Amityville Horror* is the truest of haunted house tales, featuring some very eerie moments, particularly when Rod Steiger's priest character is assaulted by a swarm of flies and a demonic voice.

It's almost the lesser, more subtle moments that really effect the viewer. One disquieting scene involves Amy, the Lutz's young daughter, speaking to Jody: an unseen supernatural entity. Certainly Brolin's degeneration from loving husband and father to brooding axe-wielding madman adds a flair all his own. The ominous musical score deserves credit as well. It's no wonder the film's composer, Lalo Schiffrin was nominated for an oscar.

RATING: 

## AMITYVILLE II: THE POSSESSION

Dino De Laurentiis Productions; 1982, Running Time: 110 Min.,  
Dir: Damiano Damiani, Writer: Tommy Lee Wallace; Cast: James  
Olson, Burt Young, Jack Magner.

A prequel to the original, in which a dysfunctional family purchases the ill-fated house. Burt Young (Paulie from the *Rocky* films) plays the cantankerous patriarch who seems to thrive on abusing his family both physically and psychologically. What follows is a plot comprised of Indian burial grounds, telekinesis, child abuse, and a bizarre scene of incest.

As the film's title suggests, a possession does indeed take place. The family's oldest son, Sonny, is overcome by an evil spirit leading to shades of *The Exorcist* during the climax. While lacking the suspense and eerie feel of the first film, the prequel aspect makes *Amityville II* an intriguing entry.

RATING: 



### AMITYVILLE 3-D

*Dino De Laurentiis Productions; 1983, Running Time: 98 Min.,  
Dir: Richard Fleischer, Writer: William Wales; Cast: Tony Roberts,  
Tess Harper, Robert Joy.*

As the name so aptly implies, 3-D was the gimmick here. The third Amityville outing follows a reporter, played by Tony Roberts, who moves into the notorious house with the intention of debunking any truth behind the alleged haunting.

The film moves at a decent pace and is several notches above *Amityville II*. The conclusion alone is worth the price of admission with a spectacular display of impressive special effects that occur as, literally, all hell breaks loose upon a group of paranormal investigators.

**RATING:**   

### AMITYVILLE 4: THE EVIL ESCAPES

*Steve White Productions; 1989, Running Time: 95 Min.,  
Dir: Sandor Stern, Writer: Sandor Stern; Cast: Patty Duke, Jane Wyatt, Norman Lloyd.*

 The beginning of the film fits into the average Amityville mold with a gathering of priests trying to exorcise the evil from the house once and for all. As could be expected, this is easier said than done and the 'collected evil' ends up taking refuge inside one of the most visually grotesque lamps ever imagined. The lamp is soon purchased and shipped out to a family in California where the horror begins anew.

For better or worse *Amityville 4* started a trend that moved the series away from the Long Island home and began featuring inanimate objects as conduits for the house's evil. While this succeeds in being a much needed change of pace, little happens in this entry to make it all that memorable.

**RATING:**  

### THE AMITYVILLE CURSE

*Allegro Films; 1990, Running Time: 91 Min.,  
Dir: Tom Berry, Writers: Michael Krueger, Norvell Rose; Cast: Kim Coates, Dawna Wightman, Helen Hughes.*

Aside from the film's title (clearly intended to cash in on the franchise) and the setting taking place in the town of Amityville, there's little here to connect it with the previous installments. Even the house itself is entirely different. While there are a few exceptional moments sprinkled here and there, the film plods along without many scares and the general plot seems more focused on the death of a priest that had occurred years ago than dealing with the standard 'haunting' formula.

**RATING:** 

### AMITYVILLE 1992: IT'S ABOUT TIME

*Steve White Productions; 1992, Running Time: 95 Min.,  
Dir: Tony Randel, Writers: Christopher DeFaria, Antonio Toro;  
Cast: Stephen Macht, Shawn Weatherly, Megan Ward.*

While *Amityville 1992* didn't completely get back to basics, it was a major step in the right direction over *The*

*Amityville Curse*. Following a plot similar to the fourth installment, 1992 centers on a family who come into possession of an old clock. Supernatural terrors ensue and it becomes clear that the clock, which came from a familiar hellish abode, is the cause.

Tony Randel, who had previously directed *Hellbound: Hellraiser II*, offers scenes of suspense, clever scares, and a welcomed touch of intriguing visual style. Overall, one of the series' better moments.

**RATING:**   

### AMITYVILLE: A NEW GENERATION

*Steve White Productions; 1993, Running Time: 92 Min.,  
Dir: John Murlowski, Writers: Christopher DeFaria, Antonio Toro;  
Cast: Ross Patridge, David Naughton, Richard Roundtree.*

Little originality to be seen in this venture as a mirror (from the haunted Long Island home) is the source of demonic activity. However, instead of harassing a family this time, the mirror sets its evil reflection upon a group of quirky artists in a studio loft.

There are some nice special effects and the production values aren't too shabby, but nothing we haven't seen before. Even appearances from David Naughton (*An American Werewolf In London*) and Richard Roundtree (*Shaft*) can't save *A New Generation*. Ironically, the same writers who penned the far superior *Amityville 1992* also wrote the screenplay for this one.

**RATING:**  

### AMITYVILLE DOLLHOUSE

*Steve White Productions; 1996, Running Time: 97 Min.,  
Dir: Steve White; Writer: Joshua Michael Stern; Cast: Robin Thomas, Starr Andreoff, Allen Cutler.*

Not drifting too far from the 'haunted object' theme of the last several films, the eighth installment features a possessed dollhouse made to look like the original Amityville house. Not big on gore or many genuine scares, *Dollhouse* seems to be hell-bent on getting as far away from its source material as humanly possible. Yet, it's not a complete waste; stick around for a well-done fireplace sequence and a fantastic looking demon near the film's conclusion.

**RATING:**  

### THE AMITYVILLE HORROR (2005)

*MGM; 2005, Running Time: 90 Min.,  
Dir: Andrew Douglas; Writer: Scott Kosar; Cast: Ryan Reynolds,  
Melissa George, Jimmy Bennett.*

While remakes often tend to pale in comparison to the originals, 2005's *The Amityville Horror* is a rare exception. For the most part it follows the original closely until the third act, where a number of divergences become evident. Even so, this isn't a bad thing and the film's 90-minute running time moves forward at a brisk pace, making for one of the more exciting chapters in this long-lived franchise.

**RATING:**    



# RETRO TREASURES

Breakfast. They say it's the most important meal of the day. But everyone knows that most kids care less about what's *inside* the box (unless it's a prize) than who or what is *on* the box. *Shadowland Magazine* takes a fond look at some of pop-culture's best characters who were fortunate enough to grace the coveted cereal boxes of yesteryear.





# KNIGHTS OF TERROR

## REVISITING THE

# TOMBS OF THE BLIND DEAD

By Kevin "Dead Kev" Sproles

The casual zombie fan has seen George A. Romero's *Night of the Living Dead*. The serious zombie fan has seen Lucio Fulci's *Zombi 2* (aka *Zombie*). But it's usually the hardcore zombie fans who have born witness to the Blind Dead tetralogy. Not until these four films are seen can one truly look in the mirror and call themselves a lover of zombie film. *Tombs of the Blind Dead* (1971), *Return of the Blind Dead* (1973), *Ghost Galleon* (1974), and *Night of the Seagulls* (1975) are the defining works of Spanish director Amando de Ossorio. These four films are chronically inconsistent, recurrently incomprehensible, occasionally terrible, but always stylish, haunting, and full of atmosphere. They are required viewing for those who wish to gain entrance to the dark, dank back room of the zombie fan club.

Before audiences would see his Blind Dead



rise from their graves, though, de Ossorio churned out a few westerns and then honed his horror skills on a standard vampire flick entitled *Fangs of the Living Dead* (orig. *Malenka*) in 1969. A woman inherits a castle, only to find it full of vampires when she arrives to check it out. Falling back on tried and true villains, such as these vampires, was commonplace in Spanish cinema around this time. Horror films in Spain were almost exclusively copying the successful formulas found other places, especially from Universal Studios and Hammer Horror. That means werewolves, vampires, and even Frankenstein. All familiar baddies. Producers were reluctant to try new things. When de Ossorio delivered a new script where the corpses of the Knights Templar rose up to terrorize the living, producers didn't bite. They were unfamiliar antagonists, and as such, most likely wouldn't bring bodies to the cinemas.



Producers wanted a rewrite. Ossorio resisted. Instead, he created a few masks and some paintings that he felt reflected his vision of the film in order to convince those that controlled the purse strings. To his credit, it worked. That bold decision allowed for the creation of iconic horror figures that are still unique and recognizable today, some 40 years later.

Rooted in medieval history, de Ossorio's *Blind Dead* are creations born from the stories of the Knights Templar. Established early in the 12th century, these Templars were soldiers of the Catholic Church and were heavily involved in key battles during the Crusades. They were exempted from taxes and local laws and answered only to the Pope. This extraordinary freedom would lead them to amass great wealth and power throughout Christendom. Though, they eventually fell out of favor with the Church and accusations ranging from heresy and idolatry to homosexuality and obscene rituals were leveled at them. In 1307, the Pope ordered all Templars to be arrested and tried, sealing the fate of the Order. It's said that most, if not all, of these charges were either completely manufactured or simply rumor. Regardless of whether they were true or not, it provided a great premise for de Ossorio that would help launch a highly successful stream of Euro-horror films.

## NIGHT OF THE BLIND TERROR

The first film in the series, *Tombs of the Blind Dead* (orig. *La noche del terror ciego*) starts innocently enough.



Amando de Ossorio posing with one of his sightless Templars.



Two college friends, Betty and Virginia, are reunited while vacationing. Not long after, Betty is invited by Virginia's boyfriend, Roger, to go on a camping trip with them. A bizarre love triangle (complete with lesbian flashback) barely has a chance to materialize before Virginia jumps off a moving train, forcing her to hoof it to the nearest shelter. It happens to be the ruins of an old monastery which has been abandoned by all life. The dead are still hanging around, however.

Unfortunately for Virginia, it was at this very spot some centuries ago that the Templars ran afoul of local townsfolk. It seems that they returned from the battles in the Holy Land practicing the occult and carrying out Satanic rites. The locals thought the whole Satan thing was a bit too much, especially for men who had supposedly aligned themselves with God. The peace-loving citizens managed to capture these well-trained knights and then hanged them from trees for public viewing. There they dangled until crows had eaten their eyes. Having no eyes, the Templars now rise from their crypts to stalk unwelcome visitors using only their keen sense of hearing. Naturally.

Not forgetting their missing friend, Roger and Betty assemble a search party to look for Virginia. And by search party, that means they picked up a smarmy smuggler named Pedro and his inamorata to tag along. They do find their way to the ruins, but end up irritating the sleeping dead. Things go badly from that point on. The final scene of the film is bleak and open-ended, and very reminiscent of the ending to *Night of the Living Dead*. A series of grainy still photos are shown during a zoom-out and it's impossible to not think of Romero's film. It was over with a shot of a skeletal hand and the word 'Fin.' And with it,

**MAKES MARK OF THE DEVIL  
LOOK LIKE A FAIRY TALE!**

**DEATH  
AFTER  
DEATH  
AFTER  
DEATH  
AFTER**

**THE  
BLIND DEAD**

Guaranteed to upset your stomach

DUE TO THE HORRIFYING SCENES NO ONE ADMITTED WITHOUT A "STOMACH DISTRESS" BAG

EVERYONE ADMITTED  
**NOW SHOWING AT:**

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SHOW AT 8:45

PLUS CO-HIT: CAVE OF THE LIVING DEAD



*Tombs of the Blind Dead* was officially a success. The gamble had paid off. Moviegoers flocked to see it both in Spain and internationally and a sequel was guaranteed.

### THE LOOK

George A. Romero created the modern-day flesh-eating zombie. As such, almost all zombies since *Night of the Living Dead* have been in some way compared to his. While de Ossorio may have been guilty of laziness in some of his later films – *The Possessed* (1975) was a rip-off of *The Exorcist* (1973) – he will always be known for creating a truly original brand of zombie, and departing significantly from Romero. These are not mindless husks randomly attacking. They have a purpose and are driven. Even if de Ossorio himself viewed them more as mummies, which he did, the *Blind Dead* will forever be fondly known by the “Z” word.

If Romero’s zombies were slow, de Ossorio’s were damn-near stationary. A 90-year old arthritic has a good shot at outrunning these things, even with a walker. They do, however, make up for a lack of speed with the ability to use swords and call on their undead steeds and ride again. Where the zombified horses come from is anybody’s guess. The origin of these undead animals is never explained in any of the films, nor is their location in relation to the crypts of the Templars. It doesn’t matter, though, as the slow-motion scenes of the Knights on horseback, complete with menacing drum-beats in the background, are a highlight of the series.



When not engaging in horseplay, the Blind Dead appeared frail and easy to overpower. Their skeletal faces were devoid of eyes, and all but a few strands of facial hair still remained, remnants of beards long since gone. Their hands were also mostly bone, lacking much skin or muscle. Considering the ages of the corpses, this makes perfect sense. Hidden under their crusty hooded cowls, it made for quite a different look than your typical undead. Despite their appearance, these things exhibited great strength and therefore it would be folly to remain within arm’s reach of them.



### ATTACK OF THE DEAD WITHOUT EYES

While de Ossorio terrorized a few off-the-path travelers in the first film, he upped the ante for his sequel by putting an entire village in danger. The town of Bouzano is celebrating their victory over the Templars way back in the 14th century with The Burning Festival. Legend has it that on that very night they shall rise from their graves to seek revenge. The townspeople find out fairly early in the movie that the legend is true, and the Blind Dead ride again, cutting a swath through them as they party it up in the town square. In what has become typical in this type of movie, there’s an undead siege as some of the survivors make it to a church and lock themselves in. They await the arrival of help...or perhaps the arrival of death.



While not quite up to the lofty standard of the first film, *Return of the Blind Dead* (orig. *El ataque de los muertos sin ojos*) is still





Die Geisterfahrt des Horrors geht weiter!



a worthy sequel. It has a faster pace, more carnage, and more zombies on horseback. What it isn't, however, is a model for consistency. The opening scene is a flashback showing the demise of the Knights Templar. It is explained in the first film that the Templars were hanged from trees and their eyes were feasted on by crows. The sequel shows us something entirely different. Their eyes were burned out and then they were subsequently burned alive. In the first film, the Templars are able to travel about in the daylight. In the sequel, the breaking dawn results in their expiration. One of the more intriguing plot points in the first film was that a bite or wound from these creatures resulted in the dead coming back to life with a desire to feed. This theme was unfortunately completely abandoned in any of the sequels. Despite the odd departures of its predecessor, *Return of the Blind Dead* did well enough for a third movie.



## THE DAMNED SHIP

The annals of poor sequels make for a voluminous tome. Look in the chapter entitled "Prime Examples" and you will find de Ossorio's *The Ghost Galleon* (orig. *El buque maldito*). It's a mess by any standard, and de Ossorio himself admitted as much. He confessed that by the third film, he didn't know what to do with his medieval monsters. So he put them on a 16th century Spanish galleon. Never mind that they were vanquished in the 14th century. So how did they get on the boat? That is never explained, which is not surprising given the entirety of the lazy script.



The outlandish story begins with a publicity stunt gone wrong. A sporting goods magnate named Howard Tucker has put two starlets on a boat and faked a breakdown in the Atlantic. The idea was that they will drift near a busy shipping lane until found. The ensuing news coverage of the event will be great free advertising for Tucker's new sport boat. While it may be a colossally bad way to advertise your boat, it is an easy way for a scriptwriter to get two attractive women face to face with the Blind Dead. Predictably, the stranded boat is enveloped in a mysterious hot fog and the next thing you know the women are boarding a haunted ship. The inevitable search is launched and more bodies become fodder. There is an attempt at some explanatory dialogue from de Ossorio, who writes a professor along for the ride so he can spout





some nonsense about being in another dimension. If “WTF” had been in our lexicon in 1974, it would have been a most appropriate reaction to *The Ghost Galleon*.

As a director, de Ossorio never had much money to work with on any of his films. Never was it so apparent than in *The Ghost Galleon*. His budget woes were highlighted by the long shots of the galleon which show it clearly to be a small model ship in an insubstantial body of water. This is even more glaringly apparent during the



climax of the film when the ship is set ablaze and sinks. It is arguably one of cinema’s most laughable displays of special effects. Surprisingly, *The Ghost Galleon* nearly redeems itself completely in the final scene as the Blind Dead rise out of the sea to finish off the remaining characters. It’s considered to be one of the most visually appealing scenes of any of the four films, and succeeds at recapturing some of the bleak foreboding of the first film’s ending. It’s just a shame that the rest of the film isn’t as good as the final few minutes.



Alternate U.S. title for *The Ghost Galleon*.





## THE NIGHT OF THE SEAGULLS

To send the Blind Dead out on such a sour note as *The Ghost Galleon* would be a complete travesty. It is fortunate for fans that de Ossorio was able to make a fourth and final film. *Night of the Seagulls* (orig. *La noche de las gaviotas*) has the Templars return to dry land. A doctor and his wife are moving to a small seaside town to practice medicine, but find the local townsfolk to be less than hospitable upon their arrival. Their behavior is even more peculiar at night when the couple observes the town's nocturnal gatherings at the beach. This is usually accompanied by the sounds of seagulls, a strange sound seeing as they are not usually heard at night. Thus, we get one of the oddest titles in the history of horror films.

In a new twist to the mythos, it is necessary that every seven years the town must sacrifice seven women to the Knights Templar, one each on seven consecutive days. There is absolutely no attempt to tie the fourth film into the previous three, but instead Ossorio weaves his Blind Dead together with a Lovecraftian theme. There's the isolated seaside village. There's the unwelcome outsiders. And there's the worshipping at an idol which appears to be that of Dagon. It's all a much better presentation than the haphazard mish-mash which was *The Ghost Galleon*. It's too bad the ending doesn't really pack a punch. All it takes to end the threat is to push over a statue. Really? So it lacks the energy that the endings to the first film and the third film had, but in totality it gives the proper respect needed to end the Blind Dead series.



## PERSPECTIVE

When viewing any Amando de Ossorio film, it is important to put it in perspective. It has to be appreciated that most of his productions were completed in around 4 weeks (some of his films in days) due to the tight constraints in budget and time that he was faced with. Sure, many of the special effects were lacking and the scripts weren't as polished as they could have been. The acting wasn't considered superior, but that was because he hired who he could afford. He also recycled small bits of footage here and there. These are forgivable sins given his circumstances.

Amando de Ossorio stated in an interview that, "The ideas were much better than the finished products." Anybody that has seen the documentary *The Last Templar* can see that his frustration was palpable. The vision he had for his scripts rarely played out on film as they did in his head. He wanted his films to be so much more, but yet still refused to apologize for his work. He was proud that he always came through on his commitments, on budget and on time.

When Amando de Ossorio was filming, he wasn't just fighting a battle against lack of money and a shortage of time. At this time in Spain, it had been ruled for decades under dictator Francisco Franco. At the beginning of his regime, he was responsible for executing tens of thousands of his own people. Franco had mellowed by this point in the 1970s and his days would prove to be numbered.

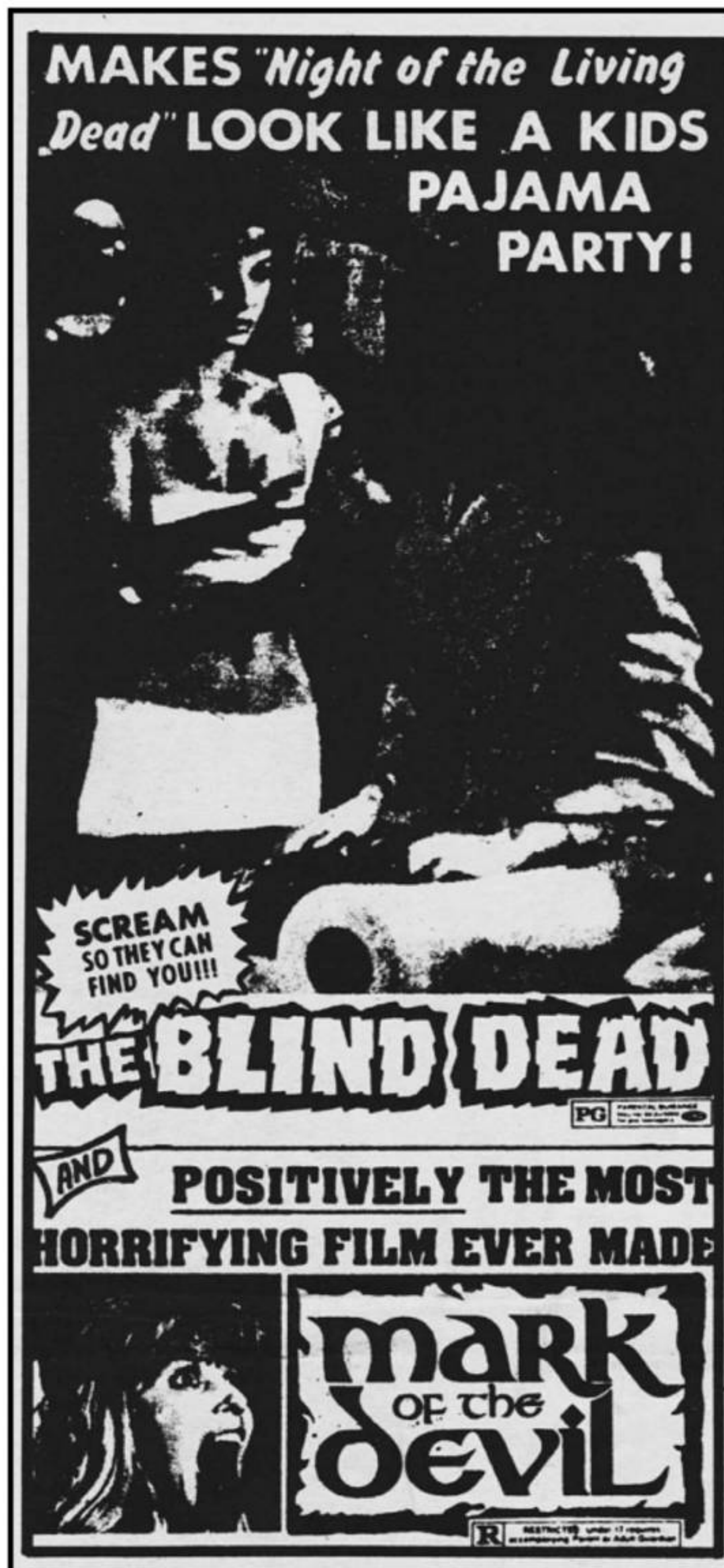
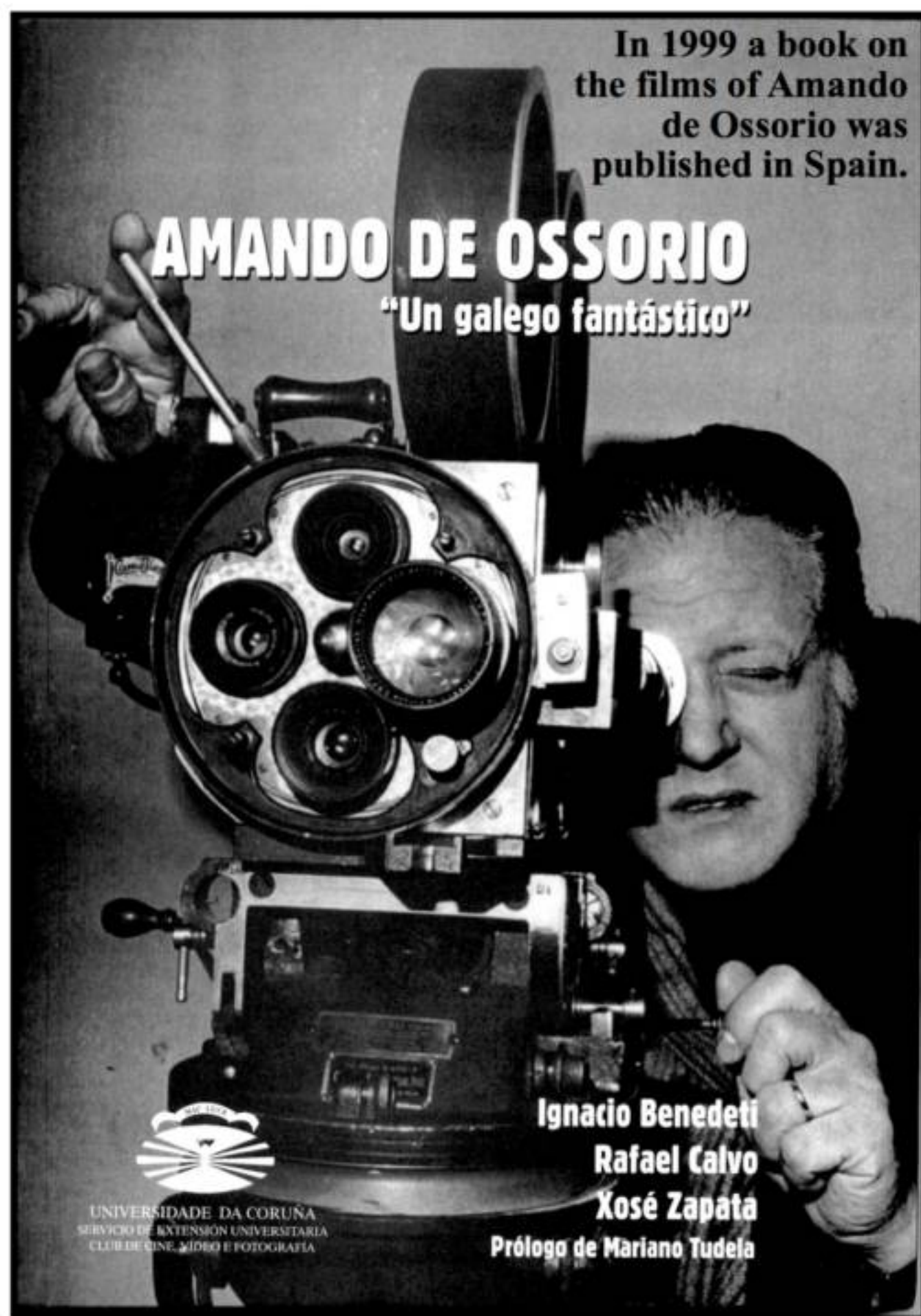
Amando de Ossorio giving direction to a pair of Blind Dead.





However, he still ruled Spain with displays of power and oppression. In all forms of culture, serious censorship existed. Poor working conditions were also common. Filmmakers were not immune to this, and that was something that anyone who wanted to make a movie in Spain had to overcome and deal with. Pay particular attention to *Return of the Blind Dead* and how he characterizes government officials. This was not done by accident. These were subtle jabs at the political system in Spain at the time.

Amando de Ossorio's success at the box office never gained him the mainstream respect in Spain that he deserved. He is highly regarded in cult circles, though, mostly thanks to his beloved *Blind Dead*. This is perhaps the best place to be, because it's in those circles that proper perspective can be had. His films don't appeal to everyone. They weren't perfect. But for horror fans he was a visionary. For zombie fans, he's an icon.



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# DAVEY HORROR'S COLLECTOR'S CORNER

Davey Horror has always been a fan of all things horror, sci-fi & fantasy. And, while being an avid collector, his love for the various genres has led him to craft his *own* one-of-a-kind, custom-made collectibles.

This issue we look at his custom work on not one, but *two* Blind Dead related pieces! First off is a 12-inch Blind Dead figure. Modified from a Halloween Grim Reaper decoration, Davey gave the Reaper's black robe a more age-worn grayish color and painted the Templar symbol onto the chest in red. The skull itself, which had

**Blind Dead in figure form.**



originally been solid white was darkened and given more decayed, rotting color detail. Scraggly brown facial hair was then added to the face. The Reaper had initially been holding his signature scythe, but it was removed, and replaced with a medieval dagger.



**The Blind Dead return on Halloween.**

Following his successful Blind Dead figure, Davey got into the Halloween spirit and fashioned himself a costume based on everyone's favorite zombieified Knights. The costume consists of a typical monk robe, though heavily spray painted to "age" it. Like the figure, the robe has the

Templar symbol painted on the chest. The skull mask was a standard cheap 'ghoul' mask found at almost any store's Halloween section, and was repainted with hair added.

The costume is always a hit on Halloween and has known to scare quite a bit of trick or treaters!

As one can imagine, this costume is all the rage on special occasions other than *just* Halloween – it's also great fun when browsing around tombs, taking a cruise on a ghostly galleon, or planning to venture out on a seagull-filled night.





# BOB MITCHUM MEETS BIGFOOT



## OR, SAVAGE SASQUATCH VS. KILLER GORILLA



BY  
DAVID COLEMAN



"It's a gorilla picture," Robert Mitchum typically quipped when he found himself on the set of the latest guaranteed potboiler of a B-movie.

"What's a gorilla picture, Bob?" such directorial luminaries as John Huston would bemusedly respond, delighted to have anything to talk about besides the boredom of waiting for the next camera set-up.

Mitchum, prey hooked, would launch into a soliloquy straight of his preacher character in *Night of the Hunter*. The spiel would differ every time he told it to each new rapt listener, probably to alleviate the tedium of retelling it so often. More or less, however, the storyline's basic premise emerged intact through each telling.

"A gorilla picture is when nothing much happens for six or seven reels," Mitchum would drawl, unhurriedly rolling a fat one to burn. "And then? Then a gorilla bursts in and abducts the girl. The hero has to rescue her. Roll credits. *That's a gorilla picture.*"

\*\*\*\*\*

Leave it to the man who uttered such hardboiled Film Noir lines as "Build my gallows high, baby!" He basically deconstructed not only every bad movie he ever appeared in, but summarized the inauspicious genres respectively dubbed "Killer Gorilla" as well as my own newly-proposed "Cine du Sasquatch" genre label. For Mitchum's eloquent tale perfectly captures the lack of pacing and imaginative thrills in most Cine du Sasquatch and Killer Gorilla movies. Sagging rear projection screens. Overly-lit, grainy stock footage playing behind the shaggy-suited actor. Has-been actors alongside local nobodies, all dreadful. Are we in a Bigfoot movie now, or a Killer Gorilla picture, *or..?* With the same low budget and similar photographic deficiencies, it's often difficult to tell any difference.

After all, both genres share a common "missing link" – in particular the literary influence of Edgar Allen Poe. The original "Baltimore Raving" (so to speak) was a manic depressive whose dark visions and poetry helped give rise to what would later be known as Gothic,

particularly in popularized works such as his 1841 story "The Murders in the Rue Morgue." Generally credited as one of the first modern detective stories ever written, it also introduced a twist ending M. Night Shyamalan would envy: the murderer is not human but simian. A trained orangutan, no less. Thus the concept of a killer ape is planted in the public's consciousness.

Another literary and then later cinematic influence shared by both Cine du Sasquatch and Killer Gorilla genres is Burrough's *Tarzan of the Apes* in 1912. With the advent of motion pictures and early incarnations such as Burroughs' self-financed silent era serial of his hero's exploits, the first screen images of humans in conflict



**THE APE MAN (1943)** was a Monogram programmer. It's a quintessential Killer Gorilla movie with a touch of mad scientist subplot thrown in for good measure.



with apes emerged. Likewise, encounters with cryptid proto-humans such as Bigfoot appeared as early as Willis O'Brien's first stop motion efforts for Thomas Edison's film company in 1915. In essence, both genres emerged at relatively the same time in film history.

Despite their shared origins, however, *Cine du Sasquatch* and *Killer Gorilla* movies do not easily co-exist. It's as if a movie that features a *Killer Gorilla* can never mention nor show a *Savage Sasquatch* by default, and vice versa. The two species never meet, *can* never meet, it seems. Simian, and Anti-Simian, always canceling one another. And therein exists one of their chief differences.

\*\*\*\*\*

"Hoo boy," sighs a bored Mitchum, interrupting. "Why dontcha make this a bit less hard on a fella's ears, Doc? Just tell 'em: This here? This here's a *Savage Sasquatch* picture. Whereas over there? That's a *Killer Gorilla* one."

"And just what, pray tell, *is* a *Savage Sasquatch* picture, Bob?" asks John Huston, delighted to be alive again, albeit only briefly in this literary incarnation. Huston downs another shot, his own simian features aglow with delight.

"Well, John, glad you asked." Mitchum draws deeply on his joint, laconic eyes fixing on nothing in particular. "A *Savage Sasquatch* picture uses the same damn actor in the same damn monkey suit as the *Killer Gorilla* picture. But they claim it ain't a gorilla, but a Bigfoot! Viola, different kinda movie. Now, don't that beat all?"

Mitchum is right again...*somewhat*. The fact is, most *Cine du Sasquatch* and *Killer Gorilla* movies do share a sad lacking when it comes to visualizing any difference between a suggested cryptid species (like Bigfoot) and an existing simian species (like mountain gorillas). Luckier entries in the Bigfoot oeuvre bother to delineate the ape-suited actor with more human-like features (rather than wearing the standard-issue rubbery gorilla mask), but again, this is not always the fortunate case. But despite the costume similarities, the genres do differ radically. *Cine du Sasquatch* films tend to posit the titular star as an all-powerful, nearly omniscient ruler of the forests and mountainsides. Whereas, *Killer Gorilla* films more usually feature subservient simians who break free after being held in captivity or made to do some evil master's bidding (in direct and literal reference to their origins in Poe's "Rue Morgue" story – including several cinematic adaptations to make the connection overt). Even the shared Major Domo



**The thematic core of the Tarzan films resonates deeply within both the *Cine du Sasquatch* genre and the *Killer Gorilla* movies. It's a case of hear no, speak no, see no evil re: 'borrowing' these themes.**

influence of both genres – the original *King Kong* – finally falls more into the camp of a *Killer Gorilla* movie than *Cine du Sasquatch* entry, if only because the beast is identified as being a great ape not an unknown proto-human species like Sasquatch.

*Cine du Sasquatch* movies date back to the origin of commercial cinema itself. George Méliès' classic early short "Conquest of the Pole" made in 1912 features an intrepid group of explorers who pilot a rickety, dirigible-type flying machine over the polar ice caps and onto a glacier. There they encounter a gigantic "Frost Giant" aka Abominable Snowman who proceeds to devour one of the explorers alive. The archetype of the *Cine du Sasquatch* genre is laid down in the very first example: explorers violate the sanctity of the superior cryptid's lair. For their arrogance, they are made to pay a lethal price, even as they scurry for their terrified lives out of the beast's domain. For over 100 years of Yeti films, little has altered in the basic, underlying motif. The prototypical Bigfoot story is, in a nutshell, a "fight or flight" story meme.

\*\*\*\*\*

Of course, diehard Robert Mitchum fans know he has another Fortean-styled connection to Bigfoot. That is, his own brother John appeared in the notoriously campy *Bigfoot* feature from 1970 alongside stalwart character actor John Carradine. It was a rare co-starring role for Bob's brother, despite the inherent cheesiness of the actual production. And if that's not enough six degrees of Robert Mitchum for you? His son Chris also appeared as a confused hippie biker whose girlfriend is abducted by a horny Sasquatch.

"Rather forget about that one, Dave," drawls Mitchum, eyes suddenly narrowed.



**"The greatest  
monster since  
'KING KONG'"**

—THE POST

**"The  
most realistic  
horrifying  
film ever!"**

—LEO GUILD,  
PHILADELPHIA  
INQUIRER



# BIGFOOT

**breeds with anything...**

COLOR

STARRING

**CHRIS MITCHUM · JOHN CARRADINE · JOI LANSING · LINDSAY CROSBY**

SCREENPLAY BY ROBERT F. SLATZER AND JAMES GORDON WHITE

PRODUCER TONY CARDOZA

DIRECTOR ROBERT F. SLATZER

FROM UNIVERSAL ENTERTAINMENT CORPORATION

45

SHADOWLAND MAGAZINE FALL 2011



"Can't blame you, Bob," I quickly nod, eager to calm his suddenly restless nerves. "It was, in so many words, a real killer of a *non-gorilla* picture."

"What the..?" Mitchum leaps to his feet, silhouetted against the overhead light. Face darkened, only the tip of his roach gritted between clenched lips lighting his features, the actor towers over me. "I've had enough of *this* for one night, that's for damned sure!"

Mitchum hurriedly brushes me aside, vanishing from this article as he yanks his trench coat more tightly around his massive bulk. I will soon follow. After all, this is a Gorilla Picture kinda article, so... cue the man in the monkey suit, boys. Fade to black, roll end credits.



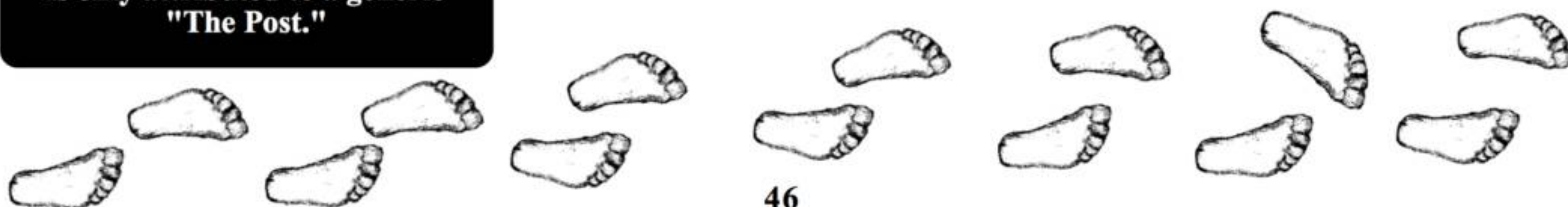
The Mitchum lineage in **BIGFOOT** (1970). From left to right: John Mitchum, John Carradine, Ken Maynard and Chris Mitchum.



#### OPPOSITE PAGE

The theatrical release poster for **BIGFOOT** made its influences explicit even in the lurid ad copy -- "The Greatest Monster Since **KING KONG!**" Note said quote is only attributed to a generic "The Post."

**Editor's Note:** David Coleman is the author of *The Bigfoot Filmography: Fictional and Documentary Appearances in Film and Television*. Fans of the genre will not find a more exhaustive resource on all things Bigfoot than in *The Bigfoot Filmography*! Coleman's book not only covers every Bigfoot, Sasquatch, and Yeti appearance in film/television, but it's also filled with countless reproductions of rare photos, posters, lobby cards, and behind-the-scenes stills, along with a number of in-depth interviews! This is one not to miss!





# BY THE NUMBERS



28

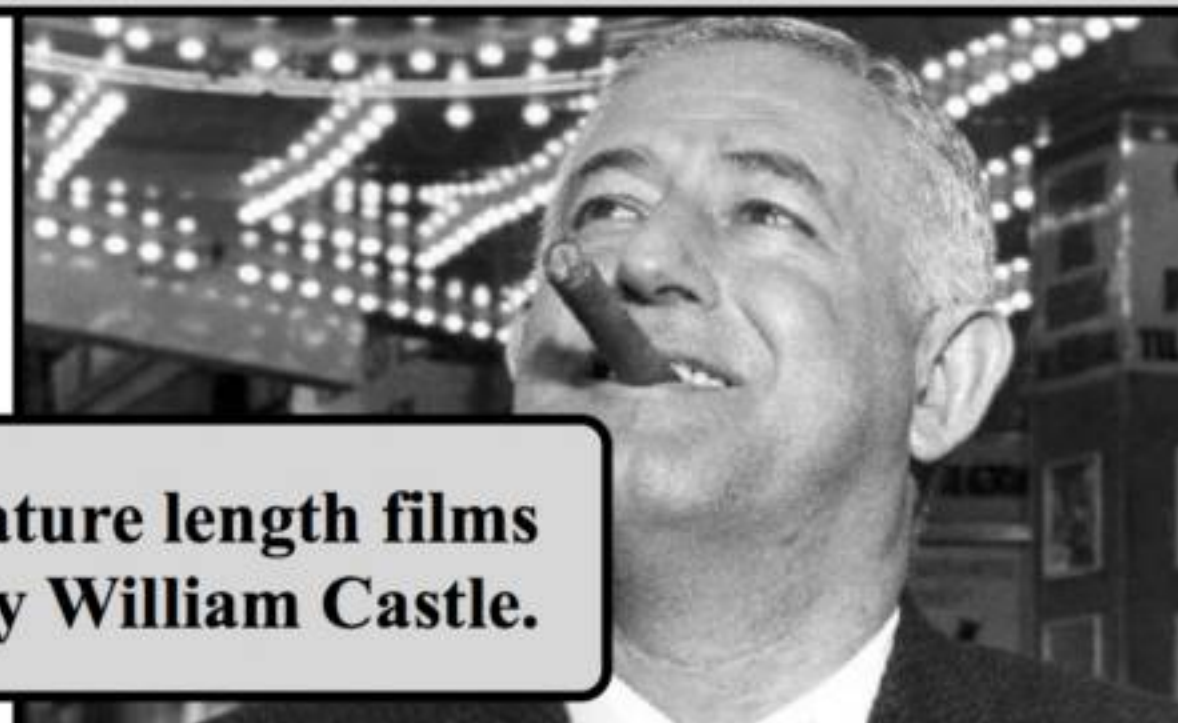
Number of collected volumes of the *Bio-Booster Armor Guyver* manga. Each volume has around 200 pages.

28

Days the Lutz family stayed in the infamous Amityville Horror house before fleeing, leaving all of their belongings behind.

56

Feature length films directed by William Castle.



101

Minute-length runtime of *Tombs of the Blind Dead* when it was released in Spain. It was edited down to 86 minutes when it premiered in the United States.



167

Total body count attributed to Jason Voorhees. Includes victims from *Friday the 13th Part II* to the 2009 remake.



84

U.S. movie screens that showed John Carpenter's *The Thing* back in 1982.



20,000,000

Dollars that *Boggy Creek* made at the box office in 1972. Still considered one of the most well-known and profitable bigfoot films of all time. Its budget was only \$100,000.



# BEYOND FANTASTIQUE!

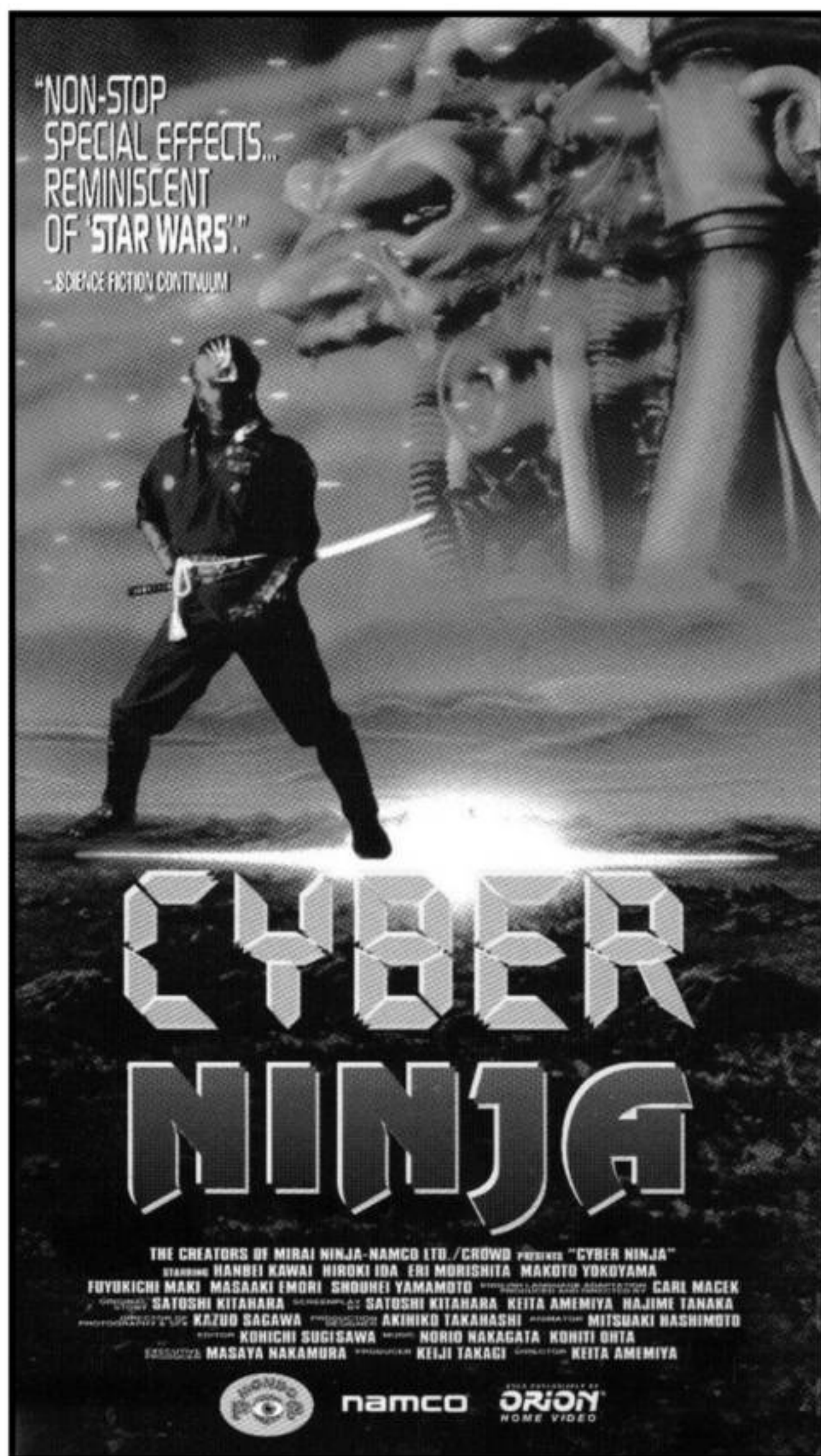
[bee-ond: outside the understanding, limits, or reach of; past: beyond comprehension.]

[fan-tas-teek: a French term for a cinematic or literary genre encompassing horror, science fiction and fantasy.]

## CINEMA:

### CYBER NINJA

Also known as *Mirai Ninja* (Japan) & *Warlord* (U.K.)  
Namco Productions; 1988, Running Time: 74 Min.,  
Dir: Keita Amemiya, Writers: Satoshi Kitahara, Keita Amemiya; Cast: Fuyukichi Maki, Eri Morishita, Hanbei Kawai.



*Ninja Survive!*

Keita Amemiya caught my attention with his character designs for Capcom's *Onimusha* games, but I failed to realize that I'd been something of a follower of his

for years. An old issue of Dave Halverson's "Gamer's Republic" featured a gushing review of his odd monster/alien/chanbara mash-up, *Moon Over Tao*, which easily beats out any of the recent wave of digital-video B-movies coming from Japan for sheer entertainment. It doesn't leave me feeling dirty, either; I cannot say the same for flicks like *The Machine Girl* (Noburo Iguchi, 2008).

I wanted to see *Moon Over Tao* for years, and by the time I finally procured it I knew Amemiya's reputation as an artist for video games and manga and even other fantasy and science fiction flicks. I also found myself in possession of his first live-action film, *Cyber Ninja* (*Mirai Ninja*). What I didn't know about *Cyber Ninja* was that it is probably the first example of a feature-length video game commercial, a much too-long advertisement for a Namco arcade game that never made its way into American pizza parlors and miniature golf course arcades.



*Cyber Ninja* did receive a (bad) localization and release on American VHS in the late eighties or early nineties, on the tail end of the "ninja craze" that made Sho Kosugi a comfortable, if undignified living for several years. The bad dubbing and ludicrous visuals make it suitable for homebrewed MST3K sessions, but, in its defense, it deserves some credit for its low-budget insanity.

The opening title card reads: "Once Upon A Time... In The Distant Future..." The screen fades into a shot of the sky, with old fashioned Japanese war banners bearing a red, ersatz crest. A young lady, Princess Saki, we learn later, sits in her camp wearing a white kimono and warrior's headband, surrounded by her generals, all decked out in hakama and chonmage haircuts. The next title card says something about the Suwabe clan trying to save Princess Saki from the Dark Warlord and his mechanical ninjas. Another cut to the aforementioned mechanical ninjas standing in a row on a hill, a shot of the Suwabe samurai, now wearing plasticky head-gear, and a matte-shot of what can only be described as a Japanese castle



wall on treads with some *Star Wars* guns poking out of the front. This is when we know that we've got a winner of a movie.

All hell breaks loose at this point, and hell looks a lot like Japanese Sentai and Tokusatsu television shows. The Suwabeh clansmen have swords into which they load ammunition, which makes the swords light up in a way that must make George Lucas feel just a wee bit litigious. Ugly optical printer effects fly across the screen. Stagey choreography fills each badly composed shot. And then a major character dies. Oh, and Princess Saki gets captured. But the fallen hero's younger brother, Jiromaru, is on the case, willing to do anything to save Princess Saki and avenge his brother. And a mysterious cyber ninja with no allegiance to the Dark Warlord has offered his help, while the Suwabeh clan plans to shoot a huge gun at the Dark Warlord's castle.



they run (they hold their arms up and wide apart, Crane stance style), can not hope to match.

*Cyber Ninja* also boasts a few moments of nice fight choreography and some funny, weird monster costumes, but rarely rises above the level of what one might expect from (as mentioned) afternoon programming on NHK. Aside from the few moments it does show promise, it's ultimately boring and unfortunately bloodless. You know how video games are a lot less fun when you're not actually playing them? This movie is a lot like watching somebody else playing a video game. You might look up once or twice to say, "Oh...that was neat." In the case of *Cyber Ninja*, you'll probably laugh while you say it. But, really, you will say it.

Keita Amemiya, for what it's worth, did make good on the promise of cheap and cheerful exploitation, just not with this movie. Yet I can't help harboring some affection for something so harmlessly banal, especially now, when

there are games that have cut-scenes that run longer than the whole of *Cyber Ninja*.

--- Reviewed by Art Ormsby

## THE HOUSE OF THE DEVIL

MPI Media Group; 2009, Running Time: 95 Min.,  
Dir: Ti West, Writer: Ti West; Cast: Jocelin Donahue, Tom Noonan, Mary Woronov.

### A Devilishly Good Time or One Hellish Experience?

*The House of the Devil* follows the ill-fated tale of Samantha, a college student who is in desperate need of some money and accepts a strange (but very well paying) babysitting job for the night. However, Samantha soon finds that her new gig is far from a lighthearted romp through *Adventures in Babysitting*. Throw in a creepy house in the middle of nowhere, a perfectly-timed lunar eclipse, and a



Satanic cult, and the makings of a horror film, however clichéd, are evident. It's not hard to see where the film is headed and sadly, the film never turns the concept on its head or provides any genuine surprises. Instead, *The House of the Devil* opts to give the viewer a play-by-the-numbers experience that has been seen far too many times to count.

Having recently viewed director Ti West's first feature-length film, *The Roost* (2005), I approached *The House of the Devil* with very, very low expectations. *The Roost*, a story about diseased killer bats, featured an interesting dynamic in the sense that it was "hosted" by a fictional horror host played by Tom Noonan (*The Monster Squad*, *Robocop 2*). Though, that aspect alone was far too miniscule to improve the film in any way. *The Roost* was plagued by poor lighting and sound, amateur direction, unlikable characters, and, most of all, a paper thin plot. In reality, *The Roost* seems like a student's film school project, but one that somehow made it to DVD.

With that said, Ti West, as a director, has improved leaps and bounds when one compares *The Roost* to *The House of the Devil*. Where his 2005 directorial effort shows lack of vision, *The House of the Devil* is a visually superb film with none of *The Roost's* technical problems. The lighting is fantastic, allowing for colors to be pure and vibrant, unlike the horrifically muted colors of many films today. Even West's decision to film on 16mm instead of digital video complimented the '80s retro-vibe of *The House of the Devil* nicely. The soundtrack featuring a



number of recognizable '80s tunes was yet another fine touch.

No criticism can be said about the acting. Tom Noonan returned from *The Roost*, this time playing the owner of the house and closet-Satanist. His wife is played by the always-capable Mary Woronov (*Rock 'N' Roll High School*, *Eating Raoul*) and Jocelin Donahue (*The Burrowers*) rounds out the cast as Samantha, the hapless babysitter.

Now we arrive at West's ultimate fault: his storytelling skills, or lack thereof. While his directing skills have improved, his screenwriting abilities (he penned both *The Roost* and *The House of the Devil*) needs much work. The film is interesting until Samantha is left alone to babysit. The individual in need of babysitting turns out to be the family's "mother" who stays locked in her second floor room. This leaves Samantha to roam around the house, pretty much doing nothing but watching television and listening to music to pass the boredom. Unfortunately, that boredom is passed on to the viewer as almost *nothing* of any dire consequence happens to the main character until the final fifteen minutes of the film. By the time the climax of *The House of the Devil* finally comes around, no surprise in any way, shape, or form is offered, aside from what can already be expected.

At the core of *The House of the Devil* rests a love letter to horror films of the late '70s and early '80s. It's too bad that West's film was only a tribute in the stylistic sense. Despite *The House of the Devil* presenting very little in terms of an actual character driven story, I still look forward to seeing Ti West's future films. He's a young filmmaker and, from what I've seen thus far, is improving his skills, at least in the visual form; he still has a long way to go as far as storytelling is concerned. Perhaps his best bet would be to let someone else write the script for one of his upcoming projects.

--- Reviewed by Chris Nelson

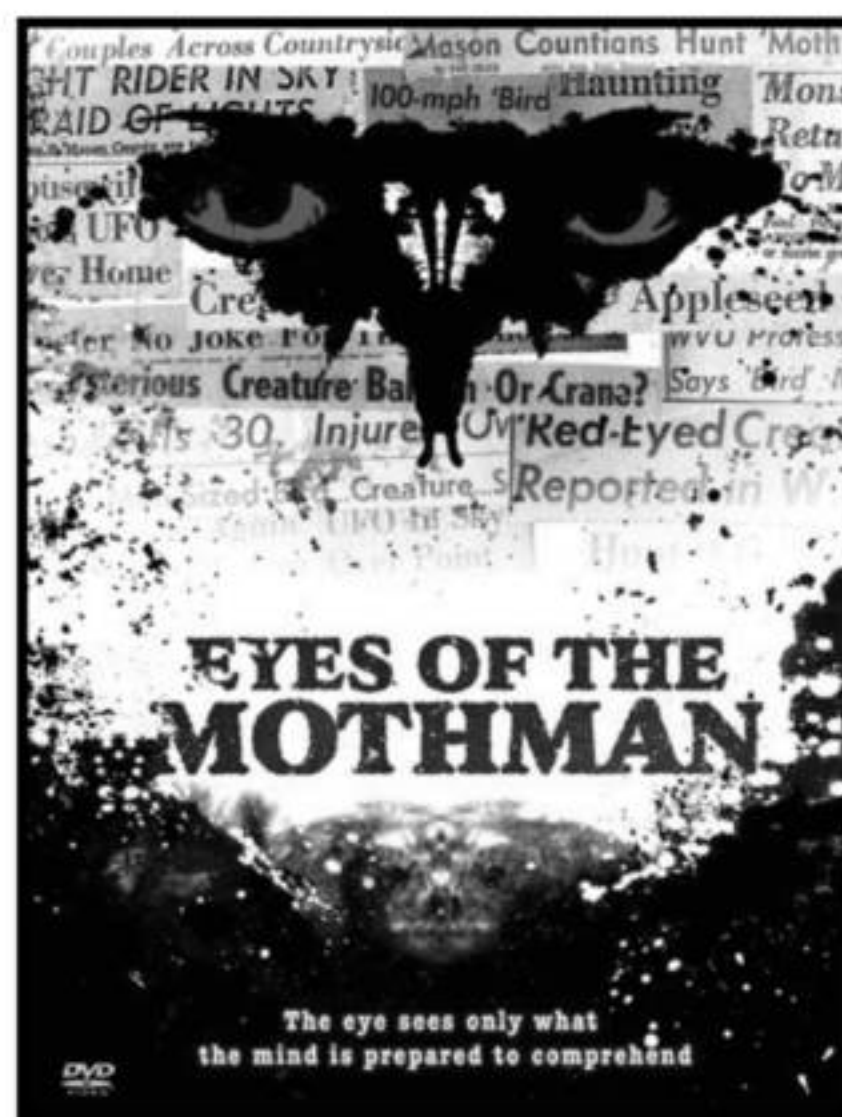
### EYES OF THE MOTHMAN

Red Line Studios; 2011, Running Time: 155 Min.,  
Dir: Matthew J. Pellowski; Cast: James Beichler, John Frick, Timothy Frick.

#### *Truth is Stranger than Fiction*

Outside of those who have an interest in the "real-world paranormal" the name "Mothman" might only be familiar to those who have seen *The Mothman Prophecies* (2002) starring Richard Gere. For those who found that film's premise even the least bit interesting or for those who *have* heard about the Mothman legend, they will find much to enjoy in *Eyes of the Mothman*.

Directed by Matthew J. Pellowski, *Eyes of the Mothman* is a startling documentary that recounts the eerie history of Point Pleasant, West Virginia – primarily focusing on the appearance of a winged-creature that the locals claimed to have seen around 1966/1967, prior to the collapse of the Silver Bridge which tragically claimed the lives of 46 people. The weird events aren't limited to just the Mothman however, but cover the strange U.F.O.



sightings, poltergeist activity, and Men in Black experiences that occurred around the same time period in Point Pleasant.

The interviews featuring eyewitnesses, officials, and townspeople were well conducted. All of the information was thoroughly researched and the dramatizations were nothing short of creepy. With a meager budget of

only \$300,000, Pellowski pulled off a documentary that looks to have had a budget countless times higher. *Eyes of the Mothman* does have a rather lengthy running time of little over two-and-a-half-hours, but each and every minute is filled with such startling information that it never drags or becomes repetitive. Instead, as the documentary goes on, the viewer is plunged deeper and deeper into the cryptic mystery of the Mothman.

Comparatively, the Mothman is a little-known phenomenon when stacked up against the likes of Bigfoot, the Loch Ness Monster, and the Jersey Devil – and, unfortunately, for that reason this exceptional documentary is more obscure than it deserves to be. If you have any interest in the paranormal, I urge you to seek this one out. Even beyond that, I would go so far to say that this was one of the *best* documentaries I've had the pleasure of watching. Highly recommended.

--- Reviewed by Lisa Stilts

### LITERATURE:

#### A CRITICAL HISTORY AND FILMOGRAPHY OF TOHO'S GODZILLA SERIES

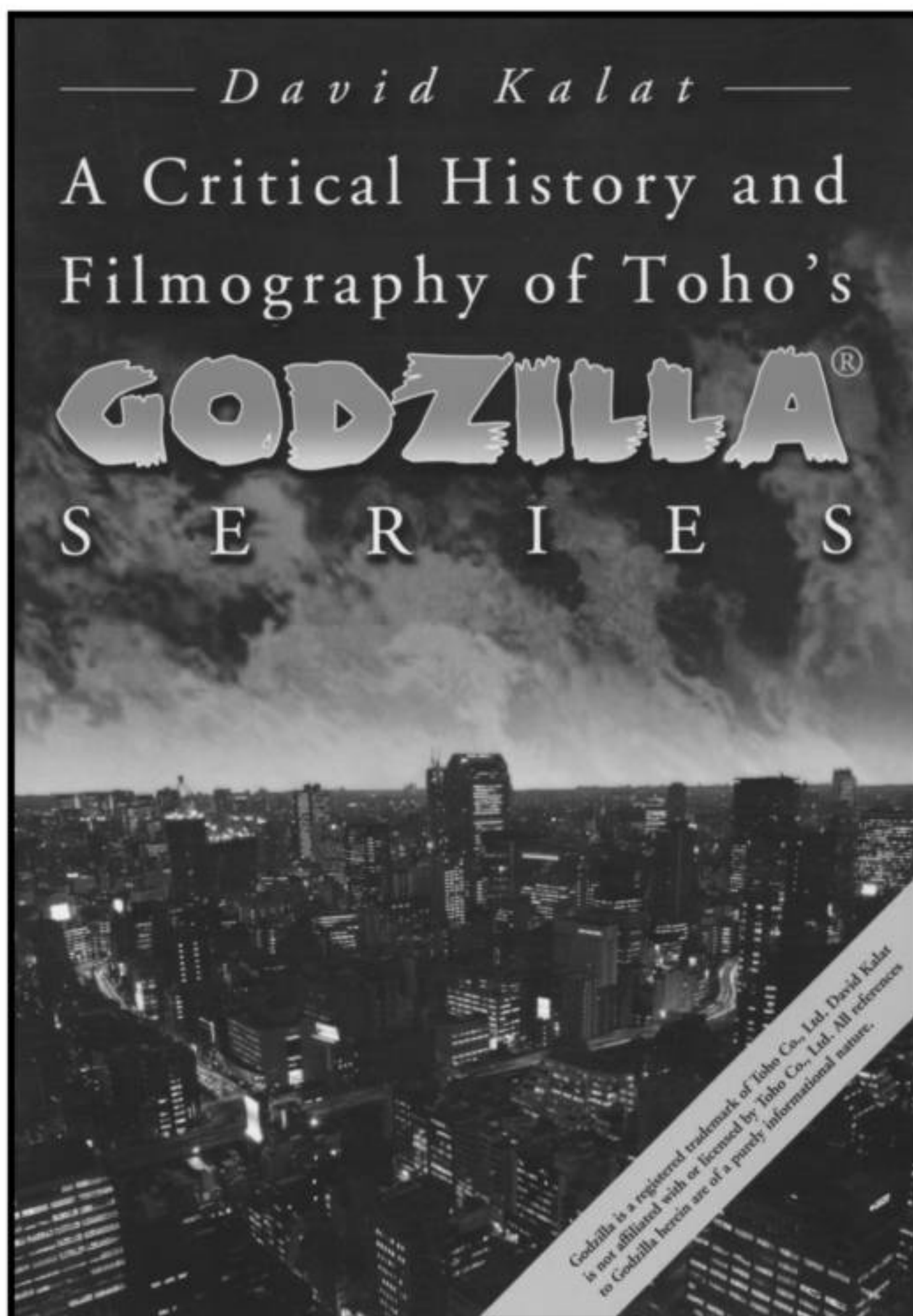
McFarland & Company Inc., Publishers; 2007, 267 pages,  
Author: David Kalat.

#### *Worthy of the Kaiju King Himself or Better Served as Radioactive Refuse?*

Throughout the years a number of books have been written about Toho's Godzilla series, most notable being *The Official Godzilla Compendium* by J.D. Lees and Marc Cerasini and *Godzilla on My Mind* by William M. Tsutsui. Sadly, *The Official Godzilla Compendium* has long been out of print and while *Godzilla on My Mind* is an interesting read, it misses the mark in some areas, keeping it from being a definitive look at the Godzilla series.

Enter: David Kalat's *A Critical History and Filmography of Toho's Godzilla Series*. One would be hard pressed to find a better, more thorough examination of the





films than what is contained in this informative volume. Unlike Tsutsui's *Godzilla on My Mind*, Kalat's book approaches the material in a more academic manner. This is not to say it is a dry read – on the contrary, Kalat's writing is fluid and truly a pleasure to read. He fills each page with such exhaustive detail and revealing facts that it feels as if this *is* the final word on the series. Never does Kalat cheapen the films or dismiss them as “cheesy popcorn flicks.” Instead, he gives each Godzilla film the respect it deserves and analyzes their historical and social significance. Even that just merely touches the surface of the book; Kalat spends much time dissecting the various differences between the Japanese and American versions of the films, along with supplying interesting production tidbits and revealing anecdotes.

It is impossible to commend Kalat enough on his impressive work. *A Critical History and Filmography of Toho's Godzilla Series* is not to be missed and stands as the ultimate resource on the subject. Kalat's book is highly recommended for both Godzilla fans *and* fans of Japanese cinema.

--- Reviewed by Scott Clark

## ROMANCING THE VAMPIRE

Whitman Publishing; 2009, 144 pages, Author: David J. Skal.

### *A Vampire's Tome with a Bite*

David J. Skal is no stranger to horror; in fact, he's a one man resource on the subject. He has authored such fantastic books as *The Monster Show: A Cultural History of Horror*, *V is For Vampire: The A-Z Guide of Everything Undead*, *Hollywood Gothic: The Tangled Web of Dracula from Novel to Stage to Screen*, and so many more. If Skal's name is on it, typically it's worth a look. Though, each of his prior works, as good as they are, pale in comparison to *Romancing the Vampire*.

*Romancing the Vampire* is best described with one simple word: beautiful. The presentation alone is worthy of praise and made with the collector in mind. The 144 page hardcover book comes in a gorgeous slipcase, but the real treat is what's inside. Skal has filled page after page with detailed information on nearly every vampire film imaginable, spanning all eras from Lugosi's *Dracula* to Barnabas Collins to *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, to *Blade*, to the sparkling vamps of *Twilight*.

In many ways, *Romancing the Vampire* is best described as a sort of scrapbook. Aside from Skal's examination of vampires in history, literature, and film, the book features countless photographs and a sprawling collection of inserts. Whether it's postcards, mini-movie posters, photos, maps, film cells, notes, or the countless other goodies tucked inside random sleeves and pockets, *Romancing the Vampire* is a must-have for vampire fans.



--- Reviewed by Jeff Garner





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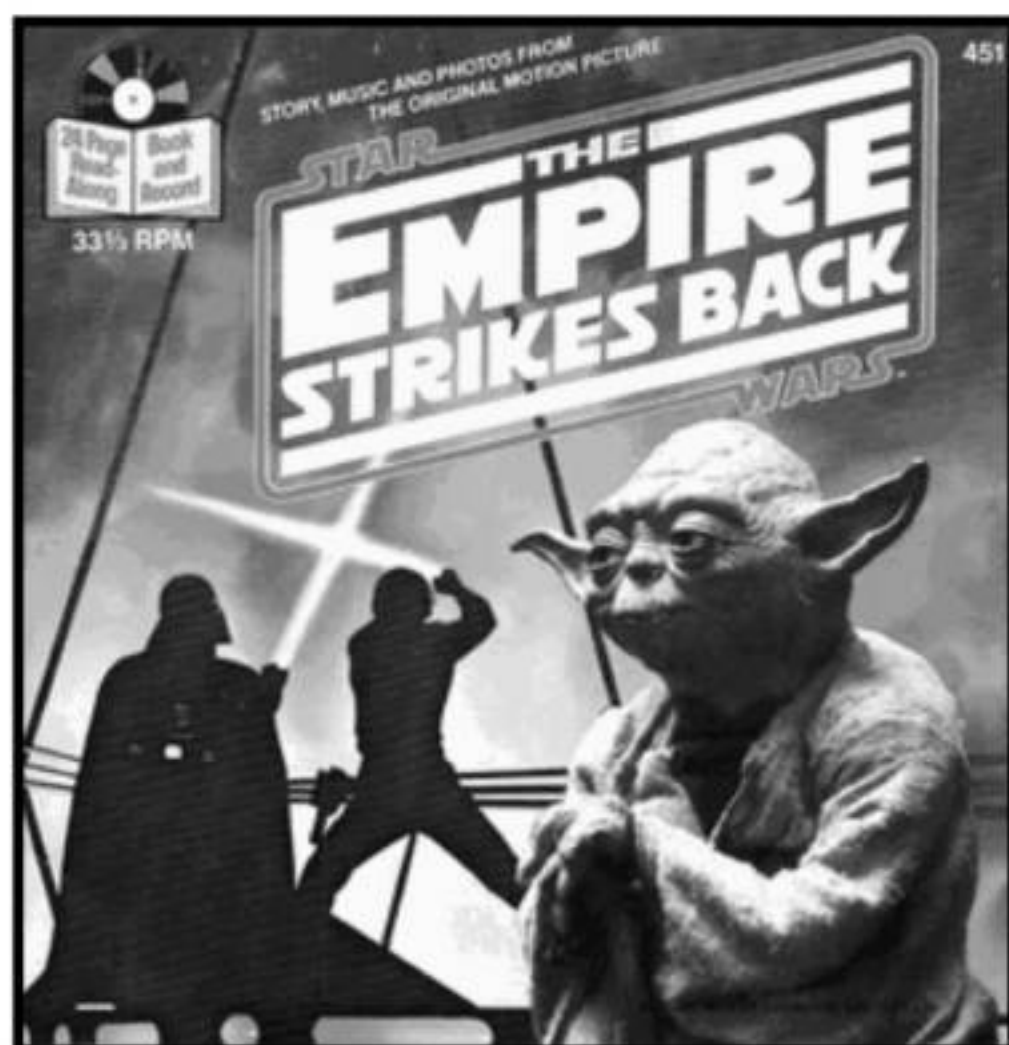


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